



CHIEFLY
from
CASTLES IN
SPAIN

SOPHIA CHANDLER



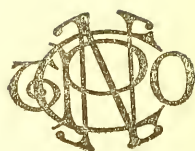
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CHIEFLY FROM CASTLES
IN SPAIN



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BY

SOPHIA CHANDLER *peer*

Ella Fearn

ILLUSTRATED BY

H. E. NELSON

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“Chiefly from Castles in Spain” is respectfully dedicated to all the sometime tenants of those “baseless fabrics.”

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CHIEFLY FROM CASTLES
IN SPAIN

Part I

CHIEFLY FROM CASTLES IN SPAIN

PART FIRST.

I was the only child in our numerous household. We were laboring people. By chance some papers fell into my hands, which enabled me to trace our line of the family through several generations. At every halting-place on this dimly-lighted, retrograde journey I grew more thankful that such lines as:

"The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gold for a' that;"

and

"'Tis only noble to be good,
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

are so well-fathered as to vouchsafe for them not only immortality but a popular acceptance of the sentiment they embody.

The manuscript stopped short of our origin, but I should have naturally inferred that we were plebeian to the very root had it not come to my knowledge in an indirect way, that at least one branch of the common stock was gentle. This information, containing no details, served only to color my fancies, and the question—were they “born great,” or did they “achieve greatness?” though often in my mind, never passed from idle speculation to research.

Never robust I passed my childhood for the most part in the company of my elders. That is, I apparently sat among them or journeyed out and in by their side. But in reality I was oftenest either a happy inmate of one of my several châteaux en Espagne or making a royal progress to that particular airy edifice that it suited my sovereign pleasure for the time being to occupy. I derived great comfort from the thought that I should not, were my life spared, always be a child. This came in part, I think, from my being ungainly in person.

I had fixed ideas of how I wished to appear as a woman. My model was selected in the person of a cousin about ten years my senior. . . . It had been my happy privilege to pass several months at her house and I carried away many memory pictures of this fair girl in her teens. . . . Habited for a walk—her long veil of thin crape, with its deep border of satin, such as was the mode for mourning in those days, for she had just lost her mother. . . . Sitting in the cottage porch of a calm, sunny day, I at her feet. Facing us across the roadway, rude steps cut in a precipitous rock led to a wild of summit. It was my delight to climb this stair, feasting my eyes upon the wealth of fern and lichen, fancying that the delicate sculpture of leaf and shell where the face of the stone was smooth might be the dainty cradle from which a frond or couch baby had just arisen, leaving its impress.

To our left, up the slope was the great house of the landlord, whose jovial hospitality always thronged him with guests. Day was enlivened by their joyous laugh-

ter as they came and went, and in the holiday attire of each dame and damsel it was plain that culture had a hand so harmoniously did the colors dwell together. Nightfall, even when starless, forgot to be sombre there, where from every window the lamp-light twinkled. At this side of the porch, in the hollow, was a fine grove and the dairy—hard by whose door into a natural basin, flowed ever, ever a stream of water gushing from the rock in the slope's side.

To our right the gentle declivity led to the great stone mill. It pleased me to think its huge wheel some soft-hearted giant, smiling indulgently, humming monotonously, flinging his kind, clumsy arms grotesquely about, to divert the infant water-sprites who clung to him and vied in their efforts to smother him with caresses. . . . Beyond lay the peaceful landscape, with a neighbor's chimney here and there sending up its column of smoke. Near the mill the broad highway to the great city five miles distant, crossed a railway—a grand trunk—running from a center and threading its

way through several States to reach an important seaport. And so its trains, almost momentary, were destined oft to carry from university to university the finished cosmopolite—who bears the same relation to the primitive earthling of rare outings, limited to the few miles of some obscure branch line, as does a score of Wagner to tunings of the harp of Jubal.

My cousin was sewing and I watched with keen delight the flash of her needle, because the cotton stuff she held, of small but gayly-colored plaids, was being fashioned into a frock for me, having the skirt and baby sleeves garnished with tiny ruffles. . . . How is it possible, circumscribed by mortal bodies—the “close furniture of words” sole means of exchange for our ideas—truthfully to define? . . . Builder of a lexicon, put off thy “sandaled shoon,” for the ground thou treadest is holy. . . . Mayhap it is a love for The Beautiful, she to whom by acclaim we accord the reverence due an angel of light, whose “Joseph’s coat” is hued like the saffron of the orient and the occident, the clear azure of the zenith,

the radiant Iris, sweet verdure, tropical birds, blossoms of the prairie;—whose gems were resurrected from God-fashioned caskets to flash upon her brow; whose rounded arms and taper fingers are decked with gold hoarded by the everlasting hills; whose name, as spelled by us, reads, Vanity; upon whose head we set the cap, into whose hand we thrust the bauble, insignia of the fool. . . .

. . . Parents, embalm in memory your own childhood's eyes, and use them, if you would read aright that score that God has set you to learn: your infant's heart. Away with "pathetic minors," those neutral tints of song! Let the music flash forth into sounds—fit echoes of earth's brightest melodies, audible reflections of Nature's gayest tints.

The flowering almond, scentless, while in bloom lacking foliage, guiltless of curve, a mere gaudy spike forming with the main stem an ensemble all angles, is my favorite. ———. Why? Because my first child-bonnet, a gypsy of fancy straw, was adorned with a spray of this blossom.

For no reason but that like material went to make up a certain hat, and sundry "walking-coats" that my tender years doted upon, to this day, at sight of ruby velvet in conjunction with snowy plumes, of blue "alpaca," of cloth in bars of shaded red, my withered heart bursts into a verdure that bears some semblance to those "tender leaves of hope" which it "put forth" when, a pupil just enrolled, I took my first rapturous lesson from the delicious volume—Earth.

At home, when I happened to be in a garb which I regarded with unusual complacency, I used to flee the presence of a spinster neighbor who was in the habit of making us frequent calls. If unluckily she spied me it was evident that she thought an impressive tenue, coupled with a well-satisfied countenance, made a case which called for a homily. Thin lips and a croaking voice are usually relegated to the unmarried woman of uncertain age. Sometimes they miscarry. In Miss Lavina, however, these adjuncts were unmistakable. In measured tones she recited:

"How proud we are; how fond to show
Our clothes, and call them rich and new;
When the poor sheep and silk-worm wore
That very clothing long before."

. . . Youth in general is easily wrought upon. I, as a brooder, furnished a field doubly inviting to a person with a mission. While the spell lasted—and in childhood minutes are multi-minutes—I was a pariah, "wrapped o'er" with the cast-off raiment of a creature, emblem of pusillanimity, or worse,—and here my ignorance in natural history took refuge in "glittering generalities." I was muffled in the slough of a crawler. . . .

.
Returned from the sojourn with my cousin, Thomasine, I ventured to express my ambition, nay, my fixed determination, to grow into her likeness. In vain they laughed me to scorn, explaining that in appearance, in temperament, she was all of her mother. We were related through the father. . . . Her hair was palest-gold, but it caught and threw back each ray of day-light or sunshine in such a persistent game of shuttlecock, that it became all aflame, like a thing with a

heart in it. It was loosely coiled, but for two long, heavy curls on either side of her face, which was square-built and pale and seemed to radiate purity. Her light grey eyes, the lids deep with sweeping lash, shed benediction. Her rather wide mouth which as she spoke or smiled revealed the square, firm teeth, methought was formed to repeat the, "I bless thee" so much of benignity was there in her countenance. My own moods took color from each hour's petty fortune, and I stood agape to see her ever moving in a spirit-atmosphere of unbroken calm, insulated as it were from her life's rough weather. For her lot was not a favored one. She was, as I have said, motherless. The only daughter, her three brothers, younger, not vicious, but full of a boyhood vigor that was apt to overflow in shout and clatter. The father, well-meaning and industrious, but one who seemed beset with the idea that the next place would insure his betterment. And so almost annually he subjected his family to the annoyances incident to removals.

I had but vague notions of how my transformation was to be effected, but it seemed to me that my child-costume once laid aside, a garb similar to hers, was to be the medium through which Protean power would reach me. It gradually dawned upon me with on-coming years, that no gown, however graceful its flow, no veil of any hue or texture, whether guiltless of satin-finish or garnished with a border prodigal of width, would ever reduce my spirit's varying weather to eternal calm, or sweep from my face its shifting register of hourly weal or woe, to chronicle there naught but submission in trial or a prescient moderation in felicity.

You may be sure I had my dreams of the patrician line of Foy, and with unshakable faith I set a maiden in the foreground whose every endowment, whether of spirit or form, was furnished forth to a dot, and nothing in my airy atalier gave me more gratification in the construction. Of all my lessons in detail none were more assiduously conned than those dedicate



"Her face was square built and pale and seemed to radiate purity"

to this kinswoman.

.
The year that I was fourteen was one of event in our village—Updown. It celebrated its one hundredth anniversary. Appropriate services were held in the church. From Crossland, a distant town and a place of some note, owing to its mineral springs, came by omnibus a gay party, including some younger members of families whose ancestors had been among the very first to settle at Updown. It was early autumn and so about the close of the season, but a few guests still lingered there, and these came also to attend our fete.

Our church, upon a steep, was the first object seen upon approaching the village from any direction. It was square-built. On each of three sides was an arched entrance with a folding-door of unpainted oak. The windows, deep from the great thickness of the walls, uncurtained, high, broad and small-paned, were also arched. The aisles were paved with brick. The pews of oak darkened by age, had sides so high that as a child, I used to wish for

a Sunday eye in the top of my head, such as I had read fell to the lot of a certain inhabitant of Hafed's World of Chance. Galleries, supported by pillars and lighted by windows similar to those below, ran around three sides. On the fourth side was a commodious, in-railed space, with two gate-ways, and furnished with chairs for the fathers in Israel—of a form to fill with joy the soul of a latter-day lover of the antique. In this space a flight of steps led to the pulpit, which was fully ten feet up, a tub-like structure of paneled oak. On either side of the Bible-cushion was an arm of wood, to which was screwed, at least I used to hope it was so secured, a lard-burning lamp. The church was otherwise lighted for night service by candles set in sconces fastened against the pillars.

The reader at the mid-week service—announced for “airly candle-light” was often one Martin Kleipseidle, a layman. Into his prayer which followed the chapter he invariably brought the phrase: “This onfriendly world.” Words without meaning to my childish perception, now aged, with

"The names I loved to hear, carved for many a year
On a tomb."

Thou speakest at last, O Martin, a language to me not altogether unintelligible. The invocation of another, always included a petition for "the lost sons of the Adamic race." . . . Who will gainsay me when I claim, to dub this last withal, the titles "vast" and "universal," aforetime the exclusive property of one Shakespeare. . . . On a table near the officiating person stood a candle-stick, its broad base serving as a tray for the snuffers. The reading of the chapter had numerous impressive breaks whilst these instruments were in action. The praise of both night and day service was also effectively punctuated by the "lineing" of the hymns: Two lines of each stanza were "given out," that is, read, then sung. Then two more, and so continued to the finish.

The *pièce de résistance* was an immense sounding-board, which, attached to the lofty vaulted ceiling by an iron rod and a stout chain, hung above the pulpit. It was bell-shaped, closed at the base, which was

fully four feet in diameter, and painted in alternate stripes of white and yellow. From a pew I could see that object with my week-day eyes. That it was not solid never entered into my little head. I used to weigh its comparative merit as an instrument of a torturous death, against the sword of Damocles. The single hair—as opposed to the rod and chain—was a potent pleader, and the balance wavered. But at last, the sounding-board being directly in evidence, it tipped the beam of doubt and gained the decision. That impending peril seemed sufficient for the rise of a new era in Christian martyrdom, and all who preached beneath its menace were henceforth glorified in my eyes. .

.
The afternoon of the Centenary was ideal. A beam of the declining sun stole through the church window and kissed in turn the age-sombred oaken pillars into a renewal of their youthful glow. At length it reached the one across from me and my eye followed it. Sharing the caress, as she stood beside the blushing shaft, was, I felt quite sure, my Foy “Lady Clara

Vere de Vere," my alter ego, as I sometimes termed her—questioning if nobly born,

"I should be I, or should I be
One-tenth another, to nine-tenths me."

. . . . She looked sixteen. A line of forebears disciplined into noble carriage by a military life or the pleasures of the chase, had given her a form that bespoke her in archery Diana's peer. . . . But let any woman of the masses say to Fashion: "I serve thee, and thee only," and this goddess will promptly, through her ministering spirit, the born modiste, endow her devotee with "style" and "presence" galore. The most rigid scrutiny might scarce detect the counterfeited.

. . We all deprecate War. A thing sired of Evil, though sometimes made to serve a righteous cause. But the summons to arms oft finds our youth guiding the plow, wielding the hoe and the pick, with an aspect—albeit oft without call—of slouch and defeat, that proclaims him no longer master but slave of the soil. The

very sight of fellow-humans disciplined into superb carriage of shoulders and firm, rhythmic tread fires him into emulation. Each day of vigor and drill finds him more and more in physique that primeval creature he once was, whom his Maker bade "have dominion," not only to replenish the earth, but to "subdue" it. . . . The upper lip of Patricia—I subsequently learned her name—was wreathed in a fine scorn. Her mouth seemed formed to utter: "It pleases me to have —." . . . My feature it was originally, but generations of the phrase:—"It is expedient," had unstrung the bow, had set instead of the curve, thing of beauty, a straight line, rigid with accumulated conciliations, folded upon its nether partner in involuntary resignation, forming a mouth from the corners of which the years plowed a furrow to either nostril, a fold wherein Resignation in duplicate now sits crowned, with a dual Ugliness for her prime-minister. . . . Her hands were gloved, but I well know what Nature is capable of in this direction. Sorry work she is sometimes forced to

make, with the mould marred by one ancestor who had chewed his finger-nails, by another who, impatient of delay, had used his thumb as the tool nearest at hand, to press that down which refused to stay down, or force that up which—arch-slave of Gravitation—as persistently declined to rise. 'Till Beauty, who abides in the tip, was ousted by Utility, who has a weakness for elbow-room.

. . . . The fingers, long and slender, a legacy from Jubal, methought oft swept the harp-strings—a touch awakening melody that Eolus might pause to catch. . . . The palm, tinted like the lip of a shell, was Diana's gift—reward of glowing health got from sweet air of wood and field. The whole, I ween, laid claim to gorgeous tapestry, as meed of many a well-plied task. . . .

. . . Her chapeau de paille was the form of that now relegated to the woman of the Salvation Army. The flare, which gave her face the appearance of being surmountel by a crescent, or a diadem if you please, was faced with mauve chiffon, and wide strings of the same material were

4 tied in an ample bow under her chin. In deference to the on-coming autumn, the hat was decked with a rose which exactly matched in shade the corsage bouquet pinned against my white frock: A bunch of the Cardinal flower, then in the height of its bloom. The day previous I had rambled in opposite directions in order to procure a sufficiency of this wherewithal for the adornment of my person. Her rose, if silken, was doubtless a Parisian creation, and boxed for the voyage, its little life had been all of the stifled atmosphere of man-made town. If real, its usurping, monopolizing petals still bespoke it but of the World, born of mould, the manipulation of some skilful gardener, its environment the formal parterre, almost as alien from the sweet, sweet Earth as if fashioned with scissors and needle.

Now each group of my Cardinal flowers has an entailed estate in a God-planted garden distant the one from the other about a mile. Blossoms whose every breath is cadenced to the accompaniment of the rill at their feet, while a choir leans from latticed, leaf-laced balcony to assist in the

chorus. Earth's gala gown of green is now powdered with gold-dust, now diamond-sown. Today, for audience, the Sun smiles a broad encore. Yesterday the Clouds wept behind their veils for very ecstasy, till Earth, choir, flower were washed with tears. At night—the chorus hushed—rill and flower e'en dream in numbers; and at times, the god of day-slumber, his spouse, in mantle of silver tissue steals out to hear, and Heaven's court is thronged with their progeny—tiny, bright-eyed listeners breathless to catch the tuneful murmur. . . .

. . . . Hair of a hue nowhere found but on the head of the heroine of romance or the canvas of old masters, such was Patricia's. But it was guiltless of the ripple with which the man of pen or pencil delights to endow it. Arranged Madonna-style, it concealed a part of the ear, and I knew from its heavy sweep, that it crowned her with a glorious coil. . . .

Her gown was of that diaphanous, woolen material, then known as "Balzerine," woven with a satin cord en bayadere. It was mauve in hue, but the alternate bands

of gloss and dull, as each reflected or absorbed the light, gave it the glorified, varying shades of bud and blow, found in a field of blossoming clover. The cunning little elbow-sleeves, daintily ruffled, scarce reached the edge of her long gloves. Thanks to the then prevailing style, our lexicons as yet knew not the word "choker," and the white beauty-built tower of her neck was untrammelled, revealing those two tiny depressions at its base, where each clavicle joins the sternum. Methinks here the artisan rested a finger-tip as she paused for a moment at her task. The stuff, save for a zone of satin, fell unbroken to her feet in folds, the rich fruitage of those mysterious, Elysian fields midway between frowze and scant, where none but the artist and the born modiste dare gleam.

Our most enterprising, entertaining, but withal, wholly reliable news-monger was Callie—Mistress Callie, strange to say. But she was childless, and nearly ten years her husband's senior. This difference in age was emphasized by the fact

that Moses had a boyish face. To the day of his death, at nigh eighty, although sound of mind, his blue eyes had the wistful, far-off-gaze and placid smile of an infant. Hard by the door of their log dwelling was a purer charm than the love of gossip to draw me thither: A well that was a municipal pride. A certain "oaken bucket," you know, is immortal. Located by tradition, it "hangs in the well," and I never doubted but that Moses and Callie as custodians, dispensed the "emblem of truth overflowing" from this indential moss-covered treasure. . . .

An excellent authority represents Mrs. Bucket as always "washing greens," so I may venture to say that Callie, simultaneously with her occupation of news-vender, alternated peeling "berdaders" with shaping short-cake dough. She had, however, her moments of complete repose—seated gazing into the street, motionless, speechless, save for an occasional reluctant though kindly monosyllable. The only room had both a northern and a southern outlook. I always associated Callie's restful atmosphere with her choice of the

north window to sit by. Thus she could enjoy the aspect of sunshine—a fellow fair to look upon—while keeping him at a respectful distance as one who, when skies are fair, is prone to become impertinent in his neighborliness. Added to this, he has oft been known to break his word, and he utterly forsakes you in the day of adversity. North Light, on the contrary, is propriety itself, and while he holds out no glittering promises, in fair weather as in foul he ever doles you of his best.

Moses' tin-shop, which was also the sleeping-apartment, was reached only through the living-room. The bedstead, regardless of temperature, was ever piled high with mattresses of down. Entirely around its base was drawn a full-gathered, gaudily-flowered curtain, and in the space enclosed was stored in season, the winter supply of pumpkins. Callie wore a cap of black net, and parted above her forehead was a false "front" of bright red hair, which was apt to appear unkempt. Her nose, abnormally long, was disfigured by a wart. I write of these defects from

hearsay. What I saw in her face was the ever-kindly gleam of her small, half-shut eyes. What I read there was: "With me abides good cheer, and my hospitality, like my well, fails never."

She was tall and spare, but it was plain that she considered breadth a necessary component of an effective tenue. On gala occasions she wore several skirts full-gathered and habitually walked with her arms akimbo. A green veil, broad and long, the end of its "draw-strings" tied under her chin, was folded across her bonnet, which was of a straw known as Leghorn. In form similar to those worn by the Shakers, it had a frill of not more than two inches. Her "best" for a number of years, it gave promise of a service in the same capacity for as many more, as each season it was "done-up," bleached, stiffened to bucram, stretched while damp over a wooden form, ironed to an irreproachable gloss, and re-ornamented with frill and bows of yellow ribbon. Gowned in a fabric of broad, many-colored plaids, and walking with her toes turned in, she

looked some self-satisfied fowl of bright plumage.

Sharing the spirit of its mistress, the fireplace was so ample as to leave but a fourth of the room's width on either side, and the mantel-shelf was fully eight feet up. At meals, a circle of saucers, each containing a different "spread," had the butter-plate for a center. The stewed fruit might be furnished with a spoon for helping, but the syrup, the honey, the jam and the marmalade were not so honored. Each person was expected to "reach to" with his individual knife. A dip, a dexterous twist to save the drip, usually secured what might suffice to cover a single "bite" of your slice of bread. As yet, "germs" were not. Did you go to table a foe to sweets, Callie's shake of the head and murmur of "umh-hoo-umh-hoo this momlet is certainly delightful," over some recent concoction of fruit and brown sugar, was sure to beguile you into a trial of your skill, with results that, if you were a tyro, the table-cloth but too faithfully cronicled. . . . I doted upon the coffee for the sake of the pot. It was

cylindrical, about fifteen inches in height, including the dome lid. The ground white, with landscape, flowering vines, and scroll work, all of a deep blue. . . .

. . . There were times when all that made life dear to Callie—her gossip, her short-cake, the afore-mentioned sweets, the laughing romp of the children let loose from the school house on the next lot, the gay sound of Moses' tin-hammering—was as gall, became her arch-enemy, and she lay, doctored by peppered vinegar, a victim of sick headache. Owing to the enforced fast, after such an attack she was always at her best. So I found her when I hied me thither one day soon after the anniversary. . . .

. . . "—Patricia Foy—Honore, that's who she is. A boarder at 'The Springs.' "—The colloquial name of Crossland.—"I guess she is some o' your quality kin, Helen Foy. When I saw your face across from her'n, I thought of that pictcher in the Whig paper after last 'lection day, of Henry readin' the returns."—Henry was Mr. L—— a defeated Democratic candidate. "'Twas pity to see the hand-

somest man in all the country, sittin' there in the paper with no more looks than I or you." (I must here say that Callie had no intention to inflict pain. Previous conversations had paved the way for free speech upon our respective claims to beauty.) "—And yet his wife cut the thing out to keep, for she said her best 'guerreetype of Henry wasn't as good a likeness of him." Which colloquy, or monologue rather, for Callie had the floor, in its hint of the perverted resemblance I bore to Patricia, goes to support what I have already intimated, that some of us are born caricatures of ourselves.

.
Not upon the pages of inspiration alone, does God reveal Himself. Nothing but human disobedience of law, and the consequent necessity for the Divine-in-human fulfilment of the same, made this book. Time was when Man, not as yet self-banished, wept over, entreated to return, subjecting Deity incarnate to a like exile, and at last to ignominy and torture, was fete under God's own roof tree—

held high discourse upon Nature's sweet
open secrets, of star, of bird, of flower,
with One whose lore is chronicled upon
that page which stretches from eternity to
eternity. . . . Then the Eternal
Eye "looked love in eyes which spake
again."

No less the Creator of material per-
fection than of spiritual, why should God
not joy in the corporate?
. . . . All consummation of utility
that Fallacy has not way-laid and dis-
crowned, made second-hand, is equally
consummate beauty.

Who dare fend the Creator of Genius
from a share in her deep joy when con-
ception yields the rich fruitage of form?
. . . . A gladness that is but the
faintest echo of that exultant "very good"
which leaped to the lips of The Great
Cause, "in the beginning."

And think you not that his master-
thought was husbanded against that won-
drous moment wherein He said:—"Let
us make man?" The crown
of material creation was the human body,

the one exponent of as yet inviolate law that was destined to be the shrine of God's image; the soul. Greek we well know that form was. . . . And man will come to his own again, "*mens sana in corpore sano*." When disciplined by ages in Time's great Training School, humanity as one, perfected in contrition, will submit its distorted code to the God-man, the Deity corporate. For redemption will rise re-crowned, immortal; will set the World, now "sweet bells jangled and out of tune," once more in harmony with that consequent of unbroken law; the sweet, sweet Earth "new made each morning," will "dress and keep," through all eternity, its ever primeval Edens.

CHIEFLY FROM CASTLES
IN SPAIN

Part II

CHIEFLY FROM CASTLES IN SPAIN

PART SECOND.

. . . "Fairly efficient," might be said of my immediate family, be their labors indoors or afield. In constitution a weakling, while the others were hardy, it was hoped that my lack of muscle might be atoned for by deftness. Alas, conscientious, painful effort, which meted me a scant reward when I wielded broom or hoe, spawned ten prankish imps—each empowered with absolute control of a separate finger—did I essay needle-work. So it was decreed that I must be sent to school, and the proceeds of many a stent were carefully set aside for that purpose. I much fear me that my subsequent career of under-teacher at the place where I received my education, would have also

been sloughed in shameful defeat, had not desperation spurred me on. I foresaw that but one goal was possible: To obtain unlimited credit for that quality most sought for in a subordinate: "painstaking and trustworthy," and that even that, humble as it was, must be agonized for.

Such prizes excite no envy. On the contrary, the golden crowned of "Lettered Ease" pressed by acclaim the leaden circlet about my brow, till each tache drew blood.

. But in a past not very remote, when I was verging on middle age, and one by one that household of which I once had been the child-center laid aside mortality, 'till but that being was left who, in her zenith, we had called our pride—the last, the best-beloved. And she met with a frightful accident, which rendered her well-nigh helpless. . . .

. Then love said: "Helen, I need thee. So long as this only heart that is near thine beats, thou must be my minister. For a space thou shalt experience that most exquisite of mortal delights: conscious power. I have long seen with

what passionate yearning thou hast witnessed its manifestations in the elect. Fear not. All thy shivering nakedness of inefficiency shall be clothed upon with that radiant garment which is ever a palladium to the wearer."

. Reader, for four years, conscious that the sufferer felt my arm a sure stay, seeing that her moods took color from mine, that cheerful sounds could at one time "down" the dull thud of her rarely-absent pain, that brightness, at another, compelled her mental gaze from the dusk of her woeful plight, my heart basked beneath a cloudless June sky. My eye, like a sun-kissed window, all aflame, radiated genial kindliness. Set on by love, good fairies held special session, for me, for me.

In a trice appeared the Sixth Sense carrying gifts. Health took from her color-box the fairest rose to brush my cheek. Fleetness winged my foot. Nerve sent a brace for my arm. From Skill came her strictest instructor, Discipline, who soon opened school with ten pupils.

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. . . . What matters that when the spirit of my Shut-In was at last vested in immortality, the supernumerary whisked away with these trappings?

For they too wear a semblance of the imperishable—stored under memory's roof-tree—and there are times when mere mortal vision but sees me as of old, my heart chilled under leaden skies, with shambling gait, going again my flinty way, life's work, done with "prentice hand" and bungling fingers, yielding me but one wan joy: the patronizing "well-meant" of a task-master that I am really pacing the roomy Past, once more clothed-upon with all the blessed insignia that ever proclaims: "She has had her day." . .

. . . . Eurith, a young kins-woman of mine, goes to college, and at my "Boarding School" reminiscences, is thrown into a state impossible to define, seeing that surprise is not to be found in the modern lexicon. As for myself, I still use my last century first issue of Webster, wherein the word is a red-letter one, interpreting for me sweet memories of the Santa Claus legend, and of sundry ple-

thoric Christmas stockings. I much fear me that the twentieth-century infant, guiltless of acquaintance with the one-time king of child-world, and on whose pathway is shed naught but the "light of common day," has no great advantage over Minerva, sprung into life crowned with adulthood.

Panoplied in my out-of-date acquisitions, I meet Eurith's counter-recitals, given in Greek for the most part, with a volley of adjectives, each bearing its note of exclamation.

Shadow Stream, the school chosen for me, was at no great distance, but I had never been in that direction. Going across country, I was the first of the limited twenty to arrive, the others coming from a distance, arriving in the evening by the city stage coach.

. . . . The dining-room, into which I was ushered, was spacious and lofty. The declining sun of early October streamed through two broad high windows. The carpet was blue-figured in a large pattern with salmon, and this last

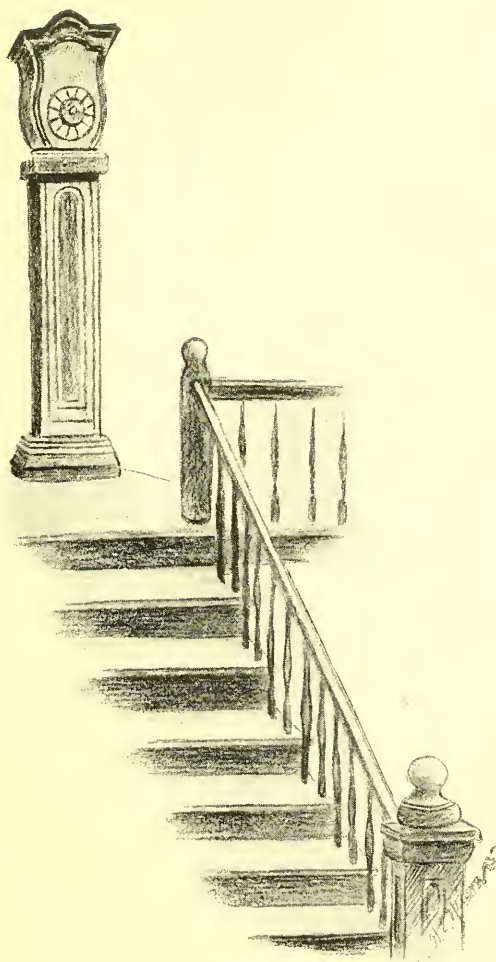
tint was repeated on the walls. A fire blazed in the "Franklin Stove," which was merely an iron out-lining, so to speak, of an open fire-place. There were two uncovered tables of walnut, the legs plain and clumsy, and braced at base by cross-pieces of like thickness. One, obviously for the twenty, was oblong and extended nearly the length of the room. The other, much smaller, was square. A girl in her teens sat there alone, winding scarlet wool off a small reel. She rose to receive me. Her presence seemed as a breath of spring-time woodland air. She was tall and lithe, with a fair face, rosy cheeks, red lips, glossy black hair, sparkling dark eyes, constant, piquant little bird-like movements. I named her Vivacity on the spot. But I found as she conducted me to my room, chatting all the while, and busying herself to serve, that she was Matilda, niece to one of "the ladies;" that she lived "across the creek," had left off school, but now came for extra instruction, two hours each day.

The school-room was on the second floor. When I presently entered, the

hanging lamp was already burning. A wood-stove fire hummed a delicious little tune. Though no teacher was present, the nineteen were assembled, some at their desks, others occupying the class forms. I joined these last. An occasional remark was made, but in so low a tone as scarcely to disturb the stillness, which seemed not uncivil nor awkward, but restful. "Mighty pretty collar," ejaculated a Southern girl next me. And it was handsome. Fully five inches broad, including the deep points, then in style, of sheerest Swiss muslin, covered with rich embroidery. In this, as in plain sewing, the needle of our Pride wrought marvels. To me all were strange, and every face new, save one. Just across from me sat Patricia. She was registered—as I subsequently noticed—Patricia Honore, and addressed the letters to her friends, Foïs-Honore. Thus spelled, the name suggested no connection with mine, and at school our relationship remained unknown. One day her uncle called, and she returned from the parlor bringing his request to see me. A man gray-haired, of superb

physique and finished utterance, who scrutinized me, but kindly, and put me on more amicable terms with myself than I had ever been. Though the members of our household were personally unknown to him, I found he had been at the pains to acquaint himself with their individual excellencies. The kinship began to pose as a mutual honor. Patricia I adored. She took my homage as the inevitable sequence of her existence: "I am born, therefore I am worshipped." She was ever kind, most kind. Patronage, a thing base-born, was to her the impossible. She sometimes invited me to join her in her walks, and in vacations we even exchanged occasional letters. And I—I was content. It is possible for a hero-worshipper to be in bonds that no more suggest intimacy than does the relationship existing between the altar and the aqenouilloir.

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 The house, square-built, with a wide porch, stood on a gentle eminence, fronted by a spacious, tree-shaded lawn, with its semi-circular driveway from two



“ On the first landing stood a tall clock ”

double-gate entrances. The boundary was a well-kept hedge. Entering the great half-glazed, two-leafed door, one found a spacious hall, and a similar door at the opposite end, gave a view of a porch, a terraced slope, the barn and other out-buildings on the left. Beyond the slope, a bit of woods, a foot bridge crossing a meadow stream, and in the distance, Matilda's "across the creek" home: Brook Bend. A door to right and left near the main entrance, led respectively to the parlor and dining-room. Then wide, opposite spaces filled with book shelves, well furnished, the glass doors protected by wire netting. Later I found one literary treasure there to be a Life of St. Louis, a folio in French, from the library of Queen Anne, bound in vellum and of silvered type. From mid-hall a passage led to "The Right Room." In an opposite passage was the stair-way and a door leading to the chapel. On the first landing stood a tall clock. The case, with richly-carved, battlemented headpiece of walnut, but so darkened and polished with age as to appear ebony. The dial, silvered,

with hands and Roman hours of guilt, had painted across its top a landscape: In the foreground, a few trees, their naked branches shivering above the dull earth, patched here and there with snow. In perspective, bleak field and sombre woodland. Above all, the moon, in tender crescent, bravely periling billows of angry cloud.

Against this, the face of "the man in the moon" appeared: Now the right profile, a vale imprisoned Dante, his glance climbing to Beatrice on the plain. Then in full, rubicund, jolly. Again a side view, with look like Lucifer's "Downward Bent." Thus with pathetic irony did this venerable neighbor tabulate the phases of that chill, inconstant planet, upon which he alone possesses the adaptability to reside.

The striking bell rang purest melody. "Day of stress, hush thy plaints; Night of weary watching, stifle thy moan;" it said. "Listen, while I sing to thee, that Time, with its varied day, is but an interlude of ever glad Eternity."

Near the clock was a single-paned, oval north window. From this I was to see for the first time, a comet. Meagerly clad, shivering, in the "wee, sma' " hours of a winter morning, I was in a frame to see it—a sword leapt from the scabbard of Mr. Tulkinghorn's menancing Roman. By its glitter I descried Lady Dedlock, beautiful, jeweled, regal, as "she sweeps up the stairs" and the printed bill on the wall:

M U R D E R

£ 1 0 0

R E W A R D

"which she looks at going by." . . .
. . . . Strictly among ourselves the appellations the Six had got in baptism were sinecures. A clever girl in some term of misty date, had re-named five of them respectively: The Good, The Merry, The Kind, The Sweet, The Agreeable. These distinctions had become legendary. All were foreign born and five past middle age. Ignoring such details of their history as had become common stock, and which were at most but meagre, it pleased me to

fix the nationality and previous career of each according to my fancy.

The Good was from gay Paree. Her father had been of no religious belief, and her mother, an American of Puritan stock, if she did not share his ideas, was at least indifferent. Possessed of means, their dominant thought was the salon, wine, elegance, beauty, repartee. For five years this daughter was the center of such a circle. But by a chance course of reading she became serious. Not merely the good, doing her duty "in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call" her, but the quasi-religieuse, the ascetic. . . . Her whole exterior—a face the form of the Empress Eugenie's, with the same appealing look, the same elegance in the curves of the small mouth and the nose, slightly aquiline, her slender figure, the delicate hand, the narrow, shapely foot, bespeaking the creature born for a summer day, to please, to be pleased, to flit, to sip, incapable of thought for the morrow, unfit alike to scale sublimated heights or penetrate turbid depths—gave exemplification sublime of

the fact that real piety, fed from its own pellucid source, comes to its full stature a thing quite extraneous to the stock whereon it is grafted.

The Principal—her will seemed law to her assistants. A teacher inspiring respect. No being endowed with a severe countenance, a Roman nose, and uncompromising lips, could have rewarded more impartially or reproved with greater rigor. With hair broadly-filleted, in gowns of unvarying black and quaint outline, she seemed one apart. Our fete days were often her holy days. Absent from table, she was known to spend the hours fasting and in solitary devotion.

The Merry's cognomen I repudiated, as belittling. But its substitute, The Satisfying, I held guarded from the garniture of speech, a sweet prisoner in my soul. . . . It appears then, that Patricia was not the subject of undivided honors. I was a devotee at more shrines than one. . . . This new goddess impressed me as does the word Greek, which with us has come to mean the primeval, the

unperverted.
 Coiffure en regle! hair like a
 thing with a heart in it, vibrant, coy, here
 meekly submissive to the discipline of the
 Psyche knot, there impetuously resisting
 its control, scandalizing the dignified tiara
 by letting loose a brood of tatterdemal-
 ion locks to run riot over its domains—
 this, she had perforce surrendered to now
 vanished Youth. Maturity deprecating the
 wicked theft of this scapegrace, revenged
 herself. . . . Coifed with the tur-
 ban, behold the Merry still a daughter of
 Art. . . . For this bit of her attire
 she was her own blanchisseuse. No
 laundry ever profaned it. Cleansed in the
 baignoire that served for her personal ab-
 lutions, it seemed a crown, built by the
 exquisite masonry of softly, silently de-
 scending snow-crystals, rhythmic-formed
 nurselings of the ether.

Clad ever in gowns of a texture neutral-
 tinted, fine, and soft, she mirrored a
 cloud-enfolded Grace. Over stockings
 slightly tinted, were worn black sandal
 slippers, each dual row of straps meeting
 atop the instep in tiny bows of ribbon. .

Genial sunshine, tender mist, that un-pent, blowing "where it listeth," soul up-lifting air of the open—these duty mixed, formed color transcendent for her face. The lips, a curve of scarlet set in this paly fairness. The brow, after-touched, shone, and was veined about the temples with with azure. The eye's deep mantle thrilled the cheek into rose with the glancing touch of its silk-fringed border.

In nothing did Pristine Creation so delight to show her versatility as in fashioning the nose: (And nowhere, alas, is After-Production, Caricature, more rife, and more eager to mar the mould.) One's fancy, perforce coquette, flits uncertain amid types, pure and in combination of *retroussé*, Roman, Greek, but ever comes to fix itself upon this last. And of this last, like Lord Byron's, was my lady's. . . . Her countenance was one of those that ground impregnably one's convictions of personal immortality. It breathed: "With me is joy that I am, gladness in co-existence with Love, Light, Innocence, Virtue, Justice, Beauty, Sublimity, Unmarred Continuity. As for all

sin—Hate, Darkness, Shame, Unfairness, Cruelty; as for Deformity, Unsightliness, Suffering, Loss, Death, these are but episodes of motley Time, which is, for the elect, a Training School, (wherein fineness becomes superfine, conscious, radiant, and dross consumes itself,) intersecting shoreless, transcendently, felicitous Eternity.”*

. . . . It goes without saying that she taught Deportment. She also had a class in Elocution, and was besides our

*Note.—He who goeth “unto his own place,” himself reared the walls as so many bulwarks against Divine Love, and of that Highway whereby it would have reached him, his own undoing hands made wreckage. So that now, there is naught but “a great gulf fixed” between him and the “Afar off.” So that now, for him, of the great Fount of Living Waters only a mirage, one sparkling drop at Mercy’s finger-tip, remains.

— — — — — Everlasting?
 — — — — — One would
 fain couple with Eternity the presence
 of God.

almoner. While The Good prayed, The Merry wrought an answer. Certain hours each week, the twenty, under her guidance, became executive for the inefficient—hands for the maimed, vision for the sightless, stay for the suffering—in the making of clothing, and the concoction of sustaining dishes. Meanwhile, she read to us, the volume chosen—seeing the plodding nature of our occupation—being ever one whose mission it was to divert, to relax, to mark “red-letter” the passing hour. Were it a tale, each assumed a character—whose career she followed with breathless interest. Each possibly might be called upon to suffer vicariously, suspicion, or pity, or scorn, or worse; to hear, in the presence of the whole assembly, such a catalogue of virtues and of personal charms—hers *pro tempore* only—calculated to suggest comparisons, awkward, if not painful.

A play of Shakespeare it was at times. And plainly the reader had got her cue from the first dramatist of the day. But it was in such selections from Burns as were deemed permissible to our tender

years, that she put the best of herself, that she most stirred me. Clearly there was either in her some Scottish blood, joyously coursing to the measure of its native brogue, become sublimated by genius, made charming, incomparable, or—by association—these poems awoke a memory of some hours, the gladdest, the tenderest, of her life.

The Kind—Matilda's aunt—was a Scot. Of powerful physique and quick perception, brawn and brain were in her, well balanced. She was our point d'appui, the pivot upon which we turned as an institution. All the cooking was under her direct supervision. Now that a Peace Congress has been, and statistics prove that in spite of "wars and rumors of wars," Arbitration holds recognized claim of a Future not quite vague, it is with misgivings that one's spirit is stirred at the sight of a general marshaling his forces. But no compunction follows when my eye kindles anew at the remembrance of chance glimpses of The Kind—her neat skirt half encircled by an apron its equal in length,



“ Brawn and brain were in her well-balanced ”

sturdily trudging beside a wheel-barrow trundled by relays of stout "help," and freighted with bread ready for the baking. Our forefathers' fine scorn for step-saving and time-husbanding, which we secretly applaud but as resolutely oppose in the whole trend of our lives, was well exemplified at Shadow Stream. The kitchen and oven fairly reveled in non-propinquity, being separate the width of an aggravating, pebbly slope. The great loaves en voyage, bore eager testimony to the saving grace of the "little leaven."

How the "lump," prone, inane, seeing in "to be" no great gain over "not to be;" or, worse, being in motion, downward bent, seeking corruption, was by the "hid" transformed, grew big with noble purpose, and, the crucial fires of probation past, lived henceforth to nourish, to bless.

But there were times when "bread alone," it left our table in untasted platefuls. . . . The term just begun, we homesick, disdaining renewed acquaintance with the tasks that vacation—sharing Tom Tulliver's opinion of book-learning had obligingly forgot—then it

was that we most moved the great heart of The Kind, whose eye-brows were habitually arched by a solicitous, Why? whose lips seemed ever shaping themselves in a commiserating, Oh! . . . Not with fruitless words did she essay to console. When "the tear was in her eye" Susannah found "the buckwheat cake was in her mouth"—a persuasive "don't you cry."

Then the seed-cake was surreptitiously slipped into pockets damp from tear-charged handkerchiefs. Machiavelian must The Kind needs be in making this conveyance for The Good rigidly set her doll-face against all pampering. And this seed-cake, so I call it, was a good in itself, full-stuck with goodness in miniature, a sweet crowned, that the gods might share. To the Southern girl came solace in the form of corn-bread, the peer of that with which she was wont to be regaled by her dusky mammy. In obsequious attendance was maple syrup and clabber cheese in-sea-ed with cream.

It must have been during a London fog that Disraeli, in Lothair, made somebody

say: "I live only for climate and the affections," and, "As for atmosphere, I look upon it as the main source of felicity." The character of the Portuguese you may depend was conceived in a fit of sheer desperation at the state of the weather. An ideal reaction, so to speak, of material unendurableness. . . .

. . . . This apropos of discussing The Sweet, whose aspect breathed, to the accompaniment of our clime's fickle winds, a poem, its burden one of those shores that we are born and reared to look upon as blest of heaven and accursed of man, whether Italy, or Southern France, or Spain, or Portugal, I know not.

She was diminutive, small-featured, dark. Shod ever with felt her step was noiseless. When I add, gliding, it is with no intention of being melo-dramatic, but merely to signify the gait of an Oriental. Shuffling would be the word, but I have a weakness, shared by the world at large, for euphony, and besides, to an ear strictly orthodox, the term in question is suggestive of ambiguity if not downright ungodliness. I am afraid I shall be accused

of plagiarism from some tender romance when I say that her face prompted the thought that she was the dream of some old master stepped out of its canvas. But armed with conscious integrity, I go unblushingly on.

Her hair, worn Madonna style, was dusky and crêpé. Her eye, not prominent, a velvety black. Habitually propitiatory, it implored as if to avert impending danger. A look, some say characteristic of those who are to die by violence. This lady serenely closed a life, long and uneventful, in her bed and surrounded by friends. . . . Monologue fairly bristles with opportunity for exaggeration. Its employer's veracity may pass unscathed but becomes a target for suspicion. Ever truthful, it may yet be the part of wisdom to intrench myself behind an array of reputable forebears in order to add that ensemble was preserved by a voice of unfailing sweetness, in which, echo of the glance, was a note of pleading. Lip held speech in an adieu so tender that even the curt monosyllable, (O Love, thou transformer,) issued a Grace. This

quasi-houri had no class. The dilettante, methought. But dolce far niente implies a perennially, indulgent sky beneath which to bask, luscious spontaneity to feed upon. Inside the snow-line, for alien as for native, to be, is to do. . . .

A week's absence on the part of The Kind, and the even tenor of our way undisturbed thereby, disclosed the fact that she had in The Sweet not only a potent auxiliary, but one capable upon occasions of sustaining with credit the leading parts.

Later, in emergencies, when "help" failed to measure up to its requirements, I saw her perform the most servile drudgery as if to the manner born.

She was the only one of the Five furnished with a romance whose details I can vouch for. Each had one, fruitful theme for the twenty, but as to outline, in nubibus. . . .

. . . . Time—some fifteen years previous to my entering the school. The hero a young clergyman whose wife had died after bearing him three children in rapid succession. Two years later he met The Sweet. An engagement followed and

marriage was impending, when she was suddenly left with the entire charge of a brother rendered mildly imbecile by an illness. The widowed mother had upon her death-bed, extracted a promise from her daughter to have personal supervision over this unfortunate, upon whom she had doted. The estate, by no means ample, was to be held in trust for this purpose. To have a double charge in the three children, seemed impossible; especially as the means of her fiance were equally limited. She accordingly urged him to marry another, even designating the suitable parti. After a four years' struggle he yielded, and the marriage proved happy. Her brother's death a year later left The Sweet free. About this time the clergyman unexpectedly received a legacy which rendered him independent. .

And yet I reiterate that for her life's voyage she had a calm sea. To the unemotional, events are as if they were not. Meeting her almost hourly for a series of years, I aver that she was phlegmatic in proportion as her aspect and life data foreshadowed the contrary. . . I never

could detect in her the slightest penchant for his daughter, one of our twenty and a girl full of charm, over that elicited, say by Dora, of dough-face and dead level demeanor. If she did not use her stock term: "my dear" in addressing our imperturbable chaplain and the "help," Liza, Lou and Astarte, her inflection of the appellation to which each commonly answered, was such as to render it as an expression of tender solicitude, equally effective.

Raphaëlle, the ex-fiance's daughter, chubby, round-faced, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, enthusiast, arrived her second term the victim of a consuming passion for Lord Byron. From her trunk she produced a copy, destined to be the mental régime of her spare moments. Pounced upon by the ever vigilant Good, until it could in vacation return to that unhallowed spot from whence it came, the locality of its limbo became problem profound, hopeless of solution, a circle-route, mocking with its eternal mirage of terminus. Where within the sacred precincts of Shadow Stream, could be found

space that would unblushingly offer terra firma for the few square inches of this luckless volume?

. Over-taxed, reeling, I hurled the query to the very center of that vortex from which giant intellects have ignominiously failed to rescue its fellows: What becomes of the Pins? and what is the origin of the North American Indian?

The attic was our sanctum. Thither fled the pillaged, with a few faithful followers, and before her admiring and commiserating audience, she dramatically rehearsed such scraps of her immortal as she had with prophetic astuteness committed to memory. Among them the lines beginning:

"The Isles of Greece," "Know Ye the Land," and "He who hath bent him o'er the dead."

. The fever for declamation on, she eked her scanty supply with a rendering the most impassioned, of certain hymns the memorizing of which our godly Principal considered a commendable part of the curriculum.

. Well, the sainted soul below

stairs knows not that attitudes, gestures, grimaces, rapid alternations of voiced grief, rage, despair, scorn, profaned—but now their laurels yet fresh—should seek new glories of a muse bearing irreproachable credentials. . . .

. . . . Better, that Watts, oblivious of those strains born of his exile, clay-pent, now gives audience to numbers divine, bends his ear to catch their every cadence, that haply he may echo it. . .

. . . . Two other daughters had been pupils during preceding terms. One, Janie, new-issued from the enervating indulgence that a feeble constitution demanded, could not brook the sharing with twenty, favors, which if concentrated, comparison might have found but chilly. The Merry, whose room was next, overheard the late-arrived in drenched soliloquy, “woe upon woe, Pelion upon Ossa”—the capstone: “And they call me Jane!”

The Agreeable was a bird of passage. Her departures left hopeful awaitings. Her arrivals brought fruitful realizations. She gleaned from many fields, only the choicest tid-bits. Favored those who

shared the banquet. Appealing not by exterior, a look scarce noted her. The record, if made, read: "Faint Dispraise." Spare, and rather tall, her aspect was that of a tower out of line with its base. It was no more willowy, a swaying lithe-ness, than it was obesity. By her blind preference for gowns of striped fabrics, aided and abetted by a black silk apron, long and narrow, she gave an impression of excess in stature that an actual measurement would have found erroneous. The hair, silvery, seemed plastered over her ears. Any tendency to fluffiness was carefully guarded against by side-combs. The lips were straight lines. The nose not of abnormal size, thin, nearly parallel with the long, pale face. The eye, in itself nondescript, on becoming a medium, that is to say, an organ of speech, was her redeeming feature, and like the lips of the princess in the fairy tale, dropped pearls. Joint almoner with the mouth, it doled of the heart's abundance. There were times however when it merely saw. Then, as I have said, its owner relapsed into nonentity.

She was a person of means. In her were the makings of a Convention woman. Much of her talent in this direction ran to waste at Shadow Stream. Why then her sojourn here for so many months of the year? My theory—a work of time—was that precisely what she needed to round up her personality, to render her an effective whole, was supplied in The Kind who was her kinswoman.

A dominant requisite for the “one talent” is that it may be made a source of revenue. Mere Agreeableness, on this score, utterly fails to commend itself. Yet, I oft mused, were mine for barter “goodly pearls,” this woman would have found in me a ready purchaser for her unmarketable “Great Price.” This not reckoned, her lack of resourcefulness was appalling. But when one is past-master of a certain art, what will you?

Surely not that all things might be added unto it. Is it not enough to be chronicled as Sheridan was by Byron? “Poor dear Sherry! I shall never forget the day he, and Rogers, and Moore, and

I passed together; when he talked, and we listened, without one yawn, from six till one in the morning."

For the few is reserved an identity suggestive of a peripatetic serial, infinite in variety, replete with bon-mots. . . .

. . . . Alone, upon a desert island, on dit that a mental régime sufficiently varied might be found in the Bible and Shakespeare—or St. Beuve as a certain writer has it. . . .

. . . . In my mind's eye, to grace that festive occasion, enthusiasm, at times, substituted for these supplements to Holy Writ, The Agreeable. . . .

. . . . Be it known that no surcease of duty as my own man Friday was thereby anticipated. How little this prospective stop-gap differed from a bona fide creation of the press, will be understood when I say that in her, the sum total of the desiderata implied in the word helpmeet was, dusting and lace knitting. Invaluable as proficiency in these may render a woman within the pale of civilization, enabling her at the same time to shed lustre unparalleled upon life's path-

way, I fear me that a beach barren of befrilled humanity might not accord the duo that high consideration indisputably their due.

I surmised that The Good considered the presence of this fifth in my sextette a dispensation of Providence meekly to be endured. An exhortation, involuntary, to greater vigilance against the machinations of "the world and the flesh," to say nothing of such mitigated manifestations of the third party in this unhallowed trinity as are supposed to do duty in border warfare. . . .

. . . . The day done, our score was divided. Alternately one ten was folded by The Good in the school-room, while the other joined the group below stairs. Thus was I often en rapport with The Agreeable—that is to say with a modicum of the current news of the day—the latest in masterful literature, whether serial or in volume, the most recently witnessed drama, renowned alike for authorship and rendering, snatches sotto voce from the latest opera, or best, in an absence more prolonged from town; distillations vivi-

fied by expression through culture corporate, pulsating, redundant with life, from those wondrous oases, springs of Literature; "lang syne" set aflow in this world-desert; founts whereat mortal immortality may quaff recognition, infinitesimally faint, of their hid, mysterious Cause, against that time when disenthralled, late, tutored of trial, body and soul shall be fitted to know, to be joint dwellers with I Am, upon rich tablelands divine. . . .

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The Sixth it was who had the burden of the classes, Music, Art the "Higher Branches." True, a Professor came twice a week from a neighboring College to instruct in those severer "studies" which were in that day considered so abstruse that the mind feminine despaired of building upon its discernment of them any pretensions to pedagogy.

. A single grain of proverbially stubborn fact, added to a mass of fancy, will often form a whole difficult of manipulation. This as preface to the announcement that the Professor was a widower—for the sake of variety I fain

would have had him a bachelor—and that the Sixth was plain and tending to spinsterhood. In her I saw my idea of the early Romans. Imprimis, a nose that every woman possessor of the like would be glad to return to those original holders, always providing that she may grow in its stead one of the safe variety, the nondescript. Her complexion was such as I have heard described, disparagingly, as “flesh and blood,” so completely it seems, alas, have human nature and art, that once were synonyms, been rent asunder. . . . From this beginning, no pleasing ensemble would be expected. High cheek-bones, a large frame with a minimum of flesh, and that inevitable birth-right of one conscious that her exterior is not pleasing, a countenance severe in repose, and movements constrained if not awkward. . . .
. . . . “She is plain, but she looks as if she meant no harm by it,” said one of a woman not favored by Nature, but who had taken her case in hand, like that proverbial good house-wife who makes soup nine times out of a flint. . . .

On the contrary, The Pleasant, so we called her, failing to acquaint herself with the nature of her enemy, as one who must either be conciliated or taken by stratagem, made the grievous mistake of proclaiming war to the knife, her raiment being ordinarily of that cotton fabric known as "double-purple," the hues swearing, as the French say, at each other, with a hatred all the more intense from their being of the same household. To this hostile duo, there was the Gospel accompaniment of "fine linen," but the portion in evidence, a wide collar, had lost in a succession of crossings and counter-crossings with such deteriorating influences as stiffening and gloss, all of that blessed and grace-conferring attribute which renders it at first hand, the patron saint of hard lines. . . . This of the corporate. The incorporate however, was sovereign. Anon, to assert prerogative over the cheek was flung as banner a blush, the legend: "Love, Intelligence;" and straightway one left off conning homely lineaments of clay, to spell from this soul-message: Beauty.

PART II—Continued

PART II—Continued

. . . . Material for romance outside of legend, had hitherto been totally lacking at Shadow Stream, the Professor, about forty, and The Pleasant, not yet thirty, having just succeeded two superannuated instructors. . . . Pure Fiction, illimitable, would, I grant, scorn central figures so ripe. But a basis of Fact implies choice more or less mundane, within bounds less shadowy, like the bereaved neighbor to whom I paid a visit of condolence: "Yes," sighed she, "to be sure she wasn't the best of mothers, still she was a mother."

. . . . Carisabel, one of the cleverest of modern essayists, says: "A mole on the cheek, a glint of sun-lit hair, a pathetic little voice, a shadow under wistful eyes, is often reason enough for the wisest man to ask a woman to become his wife. . . . I have no re-

membrance of a girl-hood so callow as not to find me an incipient match-maker. Mature, I am like that old woman of Thackeray's, in whose eyes life was an eternal love-match, and who never could see two young people together without fancying they were dying for each other.

By this token, although not present, I was able to fix with a considerable degree of certainty, the moment when the Professor first saw my heroine in her true colors, that is to say, by the light of her blush. A comparison of the shades in manner during their witnessed encounters before and after, was my formula. . . . Gradations subtile, and quite impossible of discernment by mere lay vision, but to me definite, nay, bold of outline as is the contact of that patient commingling of life's whole motley: White (color sublimated) with Black, who, muffled, pusillanimous, flees the Hand that proffers charged mortar and potential pestle, escapes, only to be engulfed by voracious unfathomable Shadow—Nothingness.

The personality that by my mental decree was to wed this Blush, could not boast in the matter of exterior, many odds of comeliness over The Pleasant. Spare, pale, serious-looking, although apparently robust, so hollow-jawed was he, that but one of our twenty had endurance sufficient so to contract her rosy cheeks, well chalked for the occasion, as to act this part in our game of "Types."

. . . . I was in high feather. Interest in the Blush had become matter for general comment, "and it grew, and it grew," emulating Mr. Finney's Turnip, when I was suddenly confronted with the truth that "the course of true love never does run smooth." Fact, it appears, avails nothing, as a premise. Not alone on the page of Fiction, where harrowing detail is preeminent as a promoter of popularity in proportion inverse to one's deprecation of it as a matter of actual experience, does this great stream erotic oppose to continuous fretting a ceaseless, plaintive moan; to gigantic, sullen, barrier Titanic, thundering might.

The Pleasant's previous history as she incidentally gave it to me had for definite outline: That she with her parents had come from their native England some seven years before. That she had since been orphaned of both. That the fact of their being the last of their line had rendered each singularly destitute of all kindred save the most distant. . . . Chief among the day's events at Shadow Stream was the arrival of the mail bag. Each greedily munching her own dole of epistolary nutriment, recked in general little of her neighbors fare. So the occasional arrival for The Pleasant of a letter bearing a foreign postmark, and addressed ever in the same bold, masculine hand, occasioned no comment.

A day came however, when, being out in full force, owing to fine weather, and chaperoned by The Pleasant, we encountered the Professor driving through the open gate-way. He had en passant captured the mail bag. The stage coach as a rule threw it out at the coachman's opposite. We eagerly followed the post-



" A letter was tendered The Pleasant "

man. In the hall stood The Kind who made the distribution. As usual, each became intent upon her particular share and either bore it off or stood reading. As I was about to leave with mine, a letter was tendered The Pleasant by way of the Professor who stood between. The masculine hand alone was cause sufficient to arrest a glance, owing to his deepening interest in the addressed, and the foreign stamp fixed it. As she took the missive, their eyes met. Her face, paling, revealed commingled terror, anger, hopeless sadness. Had she received it with a smile, or even gravely calm, he would have doubtless presaged a sequel inconsequential. As it was, months passed without record of aught that could silence his doubt or banish the trinity of misery brooding in her bosom.

Words had no part in my appraisal of these facts. At intervals, a witness when the two met in the exercise of their professional engagements, I read in his glance, lanced and withdrawn in a flash: "I loved unquestioning. I still love, but now I also doubt." In hers, fluttering as

on maimed pinion: "I too love, but this doubt, yawning chasm betwixt us, ready to engulf freight of affection expressed from thee to me, from me to thee, I am powerless to span. For aught I know, this must so be until Time surrenders to Duration unmeasured. Then will set in Inflow transcendent, offering safe convoy for all love found deathless."

. . . . The close of the next term found me prepared to spend that vacation or part of it, at Shadow Stream, self-constituted nurse of The Pleasant. The one girl from abroad who was not to go home until the end of her several years' course, became my eager assistant, so dear was the stricken to us all. Our Professor, resident at the College, rode over daily, anxiously questioning. One there was, hospitably sheltered for the time, who bent over that sick bed in a grief that seemed torture. The week previous had seen his advent, under circumstances similar to the arrival of his last letter.

As then, out in group under a fine sun, we met the Professor, not as yet however, arrived at the gateway. In his wake

lumbered the stage coach, which presently stopped full—not for the sake of the mail-pouch that could be tossed to the expectant coachman without a halt, but to let down a passenger—a gentleman. . . .

. . . The next moment the Pleasant was a heap, apparently lifeless, upon the roadside. . . .

. . . Twice had my charge regained consciousness, her expression placid as she met the anxious gaze of her several attendants, until her eye rested upon the stranger, when with a look of terror, she relapsed. I reported this to the physician when he came, and found me alone with the patient. . . .

. . . “Either he is a knave, or the counterpart of some wretch whom she believes him to be,” said he testily. “To you, madam,” continued he, addressing the Good, who now entered,” this man finding lodgment here, was seen to deliver a sealed packet. Its contents, as yet unknown it seems, to any of the household save yourself, have given you I am sure every assurance of the bearer’s worth, as you not only accord him hospitality, but

treat him with the utmost consideration. The woman lying here must have some painful misconception, either of the person's identity or of his standing. I suggest that you read this paper to her when appearances indicate her ability to grasp its purport.

For a time, his visits to the sick must cease. In her weak condition, repetition of the shock his presence occasions might prove fatal."

Only the doctor was present at the reading, which, a few days after, conditions made possible. The facts given were not made known to the household, until the Pleasant restored to health, disclosed them herself.

When alone with me during her convalescence, she frequently expressed a wish to discuss the subject, but I urged quiet to see that the unknown, Felix she called him, was now a visitor whose presence brought healing instead of bane—sufficed me.

Felix, she related, was her brother, several years her junior. Left in Europe to complete his course at a University,

when she with her parents came to the United States, partly in pursuit of health, and partly to watch some property interests, he appeared to be developing nobility of character. On a certain night of fete, he joined two of his class. Wine got the mastery of him. Later, he was found, not as yet fully recovered, beside the dead body of the one. The other, returning shortly after the discovery, acknowledged that he had been of the party, that all had been drinking, with exchange of high words. But he averred that up to the time of his going out to order certain supplies, the same arriving in the course of his testimony, no shooting had occurred.

Apparent verification of this account, it appears, was not wanting. Every bit of time, there. No gap. Moment matched moment to a nicety. No appearance of trituration announced in thunder tones the absence of a crumb. The statement of Felix sober was as incoherent as had been that of Felix drunk. His memory had not made a single registry of that night. *For

*—See the case of Mrs. Ada Gilbert Dennis, Washington, D. C., Dec., 1901.

aught he knew to the contrary, he was guilty. . . . His parents, not strong, were fatally prostrated by the tidings. The orphaned sister—strive as she might, could think of him, but with mingled shame, anger, and despair. In her one letter to him, she did not fully reveal this. She permitted his letters, but he was not to expect replies.

.
The case bade fair to swell the list of judicial puzzles. Public sentiment adjudged Felix guilty. But the counterweight—Absence of Proof!

Pending the decision, “the other,” as I have called him had a summons, to the bar of Heaven. With his dying breath, he confessed the crime, and revealed, how taking advantage of Felix’s condition, he had hazarded his testimony; how, at the elbow of his every movement, had stood Circumstance, an eager, nay, an importuning second.

For this lapse, preceded as it had been by a career strictly honorable, Felix obtained plenary pardon. Disciplined by error acknowledged and repented of, his

self-respect—heretofore evidenced but by qualities admirable, mere leaf and blossom—now richly fruited into loveliness, and capacity for burden-sharing. . . .

. . . . The packet bore attestation ample and unquestionable. A duplicate, forwarded to his sister, and which would have prepared her for his arrival, appeared to have miscarried. . . .

. . . . The sanctum at Shadow Stream was "The Right Room." Entering by a door at one end of the hall transept, you faced two bays, separated by an open fireplace. These windows had a southern aspect:—The terraced slope of the lawn, where—fended from Boreal wrath—grass kept "dapper and pert and sassy, and sassy and dapper and pert," from June to June. Beyond, and ranging with the house, an enclosed parallelogram of vegetable garden, divided lengthwise by a grass-plat, presumably a bleaching-ground, whose ample width suggested roadway for a coach and six. Not of gross matter—wheel and hoof expectantly steel-ed against heartless, defiant flint—but such

as a wand might conjure; one that would not shame immaculate, wheelless Broek; wheel in whose track rose dust impalpable—the mutely, clattering hoof of whose prancing, curveting steed awoke echo noiseless. . . . Still beyond, through a section of meadow, flowed a broad stream. In the wake of this Memnon motion, coquetting now with right bank, now with left, followed Beauty, to set a curve, to levy from the passing seasons wherewith to deck it. . . . “Beauty is dead,” sighed Winter. But the immortal only caught napping, transfixed the sigh, when, presto! there lay the snow-wreath. “I’ll none of this pallid crown for Earth” blustered March, “as well a fillet of iron.” And the spurned, murmuring “Resurgam” sank shroudless into its grave, while sudden, sun-crowned zephyrchasing April’s tears, echoed: “Aye, ’tis but an *au revoir*.” And at that bugle note, the dead arose,—Protean. . . . For her wooer’s May smile, a Flora wan—shy. Flush reluctant, but pronounced, answered June’s caress. Summer’s ardor reflected acme of glow.

. . . "Love is growing cold," chanted Autumn, to the music of Aeolus' harp. . . And at the first averted look of the Sun-god—Flora, all Affection's scarlet livery prone about her, hid in 'tire of Pride, discovered shame,—stood erect, scornful, regally splendid with purple and gold, before her fickle lord.

. At one end, the Right Room was divided by a portiere from the parlor. At the opposite, by a sliding sash from the conservatory. The prevailing tint of wall and carpet was green. The maple wood-work's smile no stress of weather dimmed. Every seat offered comfort. Sewing-machine, work-basket, embroidery-frame, sketching materials—occupation. An upright piano, brackets filled with books, various games hid in presses—amusement.

In those same wall cupboards were stored also, toys galore, all prematurely aged from leading too fast a life, some giving unmistakable signs of approaching dissolution. Though this home was childless, Brookbend contained store numerous and varied from which to borrow:

Boys, whose shoes, supposedly the seat of noise, were left upon the threshold in exchange for slippers. Sampson shorn of his locks; "howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven."

. . . Girls, of assorted sizes, but otherwise of aspect identical as the proverbial two peas: Hair, nut-brown, abundant, ringlety. Eyes, small, dark, twinkling. Lips and cheeks of vivid red, against milky whiteness.

This living-room, methought, personated Utility: Small of stature, comely, smiling, light of foot, gown immaculate, and of a fabric warranted to "wash." .

. . . In awful contrast was the parlor. At the threshold, an air of: "Tickets, please," curbed my presumptuous step.

. . . "Hands off!" cried in unison four great, glazed cabinets, one for each corner. Securely locked, they were repositories for gifts, rare, beautiful, and costly, received on various fete days, during a long series of years by the ladies as a school, from their pupils collectively.

Above the mantel, and of a size nearly equalling the great chimney-piece, hung

a framed tapestry, wrought by the Good: A boy, yet in his infancy, being led by a woman along a pebbly roadway, crossed by a shallow "run." The mother's pose, as she bends to suit the baby stature, is exquisite. They have reached the brink.

. . . . Awful chasm! It is not the water he fears. Its coaxing voice is music. His home brook he oft chooses for a play-fellow, and the tiny hands and feet find pleasure—all the sweeter for being forbidden, in the luring toy.

. . . But this side is all he knows as yet. Beyond is voiceless. . . . Barrier, to three years, but says: "I fend." Its after-voice: "Progress—Life, passes. Stagnation—Death, stays," only a schooled ear catches.

Responsive to the tightening grasp, and uplifted, appealing eye, she sends a gaze tender, solicitous. But for wonted offer of the sheltering arms, he hears: "Be brave." Vocabulary strange; offering, mystery unsolvable. But instinct with filial obedience, one tyro foot, cautiously but firmly planted before its fellow, seems boldly essaying trial of this new chart. .

. . . The bays of the Right Room extended to the chamber above, occupied by the Merry. Below, costless exuberance. Above, affluent severity. . . . The polished oaken floor was uncovered, save for a skin of lynx or bear before some favored seat of cane, and a great dull-colored oriental rug in front of the wide fireplace, with its fender and irons of brass. The walls were wainscoted. An alcove, open to view, held a bedstead of brass, the cylindric bolster, the coverlet, and canopy, white. Another, screened by a hanging of costly India stuff and lighted by an oval, served as dressing-room. A chiffonier and table, together with seats of varied design, were of polished oak, with surface unbroken by any chasing in whose crevices dust might lurk. There were two portraits—forebears of the Merry, one saw at a glance. One, of a mailed warrior, near which was a suit of armor, with a sword and scabbard of fine workmanship. The other a Diana, from whose frame depended a bow and a quiver of arrows. Bracketed shelves above the chimney-piece offered a study in vases. Besides,

tapers in sconces, a harp, a guitar, and a disk of burnished steel, which was the one mirror. . . .

. . . It was beside the cradle of her infant, Felicia, that the Pleasant-wife of Professor ———, told me that a certain letter, duplicate of a sealed packet, and wherein was announced Felix's innocence, together with the date of his intended arrival, was the identical one that she received in the presence of the Professor.

. . . Believing it to be but an iteration of its sad predecessors, and piqued at its untimely arrival, she had destroyed it without breaking the seal.

TOW SPINNINGS

R. F. D.

TOW SPINNINGS

R. F. D.

. . . . Updown has been struck out of existence. And we have not had a cyclone, either. It has been deprived of its Post-office. And that, too, after the village had reached the respectable age of one hundred years. It boasted also that one man had been Post-master there, as well as law-writer and surveyor, for forty consecutive years. But that was in the nineteenth century's beginning, when a man was a patriot and a citizen, rather than a voter—be he Whig or Democrat.

The Post-office closed! Dies Irae! Our mail, for a space was to be suspended, like Mahomet's coffin. . . . After waiting both patiently and impatiently, I received three letters. The first from the hands of the parson. (Heaven lent its messenger in Earth's dire strait). The

second by a small boy, name unknown. (Mayhap an imp. Was our case then moving even Hades to pity?) Number three I had to agonize for. . . . Time—10 P. M., in the dead of winter. The heavens like a pall, moonless, starless. Lantern in hand, I gathered my skirts about me, and crossed the muddy road, to fish my letter, at the imminent risk of getting my fingers full of splinters, out of a box labelled Oswego Starch, nailed to a telephone-pole. . . . There were other letters, not for me. Updown had for the nonce, returned to apostolic times. We had all things in common. There is a theory, I am told, that matter has no existence, all is mind.

Another theory is, that all matter, even inert, is endued with consciousness, intelligence. I rather incline to this last.

The letter, who must have been a mind-reader, seeing my perplexed, wandering gaze—I had forgotten my glasses, took the initiative, and sought my hand. It required an immediate answer. Now with no Joseph to warn me, I had been living from hand to mouth, so to speak, in the

matter of stamps, and the famine was grievous in the land—not one left. . . . What to do with my reply, even if I had a stamp! “Local men have local ideas.” Ideas limited in number and restricted in extent. At the Post-office I had mailed my letters, there also I had procured stamps. It was the heart of my existence as a commercial being. Without it, I was motionless, pulseless.

It took full seven days to reconstruct my world out of this enforced chaos. At the end of that time I was still pulseless, but no longer motionless. A machine—a carrier’s cart—(a Post-office on wheels they call it) galvanized me into an automaton.

I found it wheeled sure enough, one rough winter morning when I needed a money-order. I never could catch anything on the fly, even in my most active days. With an eye to the fitness of things, the carrier himself is a mercury, i. e., winged. He has strict government orders not to leave his post. He will deposit your mail in a box placed on the road-side for that purpose, but as he does this with-

out alighting—on the wing—so to speak, it may be said that he and his cart—brook-like—“go on forever.”

For the opposition, there is a Postal Station, where you may have your mail left. “You pays your money and you takes your choice.” There is an opposition, and some of us have been destroying mail-boxes on lonely by-ways, and if we are not careful, we may find ourselves in the penitentiary. We have three general government boxes. Receptacles that some of us had to learn how to use. Set up here, each looks like a Cockney out of the sound of Bow-bells. A few of us, who pass our winters in the city, have the like, but smaller, before our houses. But of the rest, it may be said that they are a motley crew, of all shapes and sizes, and bearing many marks of previous condition of servitude. My neighbor, the spinster, has a natty-looking little affair labeled Mellin’s Food. . . . Some such one, I was surprised to find, before the door of one of our grantees. I made free to remark upon it. Said he, “I’ll let you know, I’m not a going to set up no brown-stone-front box for sich an institootion.”

At first we were cautioned to have our mail addressed: Hilldale (our nearest railroad station) care Carrier No.—. . . .
. . . Now Hilldale is a thing of yesterday. It came into being when the screech of the locomotive first reached our century-old village. . . . I am choleric. When I saw my letter I grew hot. My neighbor isn't—she only laughed, as she glanced at hers, and said: "First time I ever knew I lived at Hilldale."
. . . But we had to be conciliated, we of the opposition. Now, our address is: Updown Station, R. F. D.—Care Carrier No. —.

N. B.—R. F. D. means Rural Free Delivery.

TOW SPINNINGS

FRAGMENTS OF A LETTER

TOW SPINNINGS

FRAGMENTS OF A LETTER

. I have just re-read "Reliques Of The Christ." A book, as some one says—that is not for the "way-faring man," and that "he who runs may not read.'" One stanza so blends with another in the delicate shades of thought that detached quotation seems like a defining of the interfused bands of the rainbow. You may thus have one, two—several splendid colors, but seven alone leave in your mind the whiteness, the clear, shining whole. There were seven colors in the rain-bow when I went to school. I think I read, several years since, that the number has changed. I have a budget in my mind sacredly labeled: "Truths." Among the contents are several now-called absurdities, errors, myths.—Do I disturb said contents? Do

I classify and re-classify? Sort out? Not
 I. In this wonder-conjuring age, I feel
 fore-doomed to perish ignominiously in
 the ditch of Ignorance, and I have con-
 cluded to die comfortably, without a
 struggle.

"I wonder if in Nazareth,
 By heedless feet o'er run,
 There lingers yet some dear relique
 Of work by Joseph's son;
 Some carved thought, some tool of toil,
 Some house with stones grown gray,
 A house He built who had not where
 His weary head to lay."*

. . . . Frederick W. Robertson,
 too, in his wondrous sermons, speculates
 and speculates, reverently and sweetly,
 upon our Lord's earthly career. He set-
 tles no questions. This is one of his
 charms. He finds you ruminating and he
 leaves you ruminating.

A certain periodical asked a number of
 the thinkers of the day to name ten nine-
 teenth century books that each considered
 among the most masterly. On three of the

*Reliques Of The Christ. By Denis
 Wortman.

lists was Renan's Life of Jesus. . . .
. . . 'Tis a book that for its style I take
to my very heart. And its heterodoxy is
less than weak. It is so absurd as to be
harmless. The work is even used by Sun-
day-schools, as a reference for topogra-
phy, etc. . . . In so many words,
Renan sets down that our Lord is a mere
man, and straightway depicts a humanity
exalted to Divinity itself, before which he
prostrates himself in passionate adoration.
As one reads on, there comes the feeling
of being out of doors in fine weather. The
life depicted is ideal, exquisite, unconfin-
ed. Over head, for the most part, naught
but the magnificent sky-dome, raying
golden sun-light, or soft star-beams. Un-
der foot the sweet, sweet Earth, here lily-
decked, there channeled with sparkling
lake and river. Around Jesus—at His
very side—His elect, those into whose ear
alone He breathed His love-message: "I
have chosen you."
. . . . I am forced to think, and I
conclude it reverently, that in all save His
Divine Spirit—in mind, no less than in
body—He was strictly of the family of

Mary. . . . If He excelled as a carpenter, He inherited through His human parent a faculty for application or a skill in handicraft. His shrinking from bodily pain, that Revelation chronicles in the: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me"—His "marred" visage—seems to bear out this. And both but serve to bring Him into closer touch with humanity.

. . . A being springing into life Minerva-like, with body artistically perfect, with mind all-comprehensive, we could not—I take it—accept, in all fairness, as a model. We that heredity now blesses, now bans; we who are now handicapped, now wind-winged, by a pre-natal force.

.
But love supreme, unceasing, from age to age, idealizes this earth-form that lent itself to God, this Mary-mind that Deity stooped to borrow.

.
There is a book: "The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus." And why not?
. . . . The legends that go to make it up may have sprung from facts. Truths

transmitted reverently from father to son,
adown the ages. . . . What is faith,
and what is superstition?

.
. . . . In my most thankless hours,
when life seems all rind and bitter at that,
let a stray morsel of humor be furnished
forth to garnish the feast withal, and pres-
to! I am forthwith enabled to extract
some savor. I am just returned from a
funeral. As the deceased had resided at
some distance from the church and ad-
joining the cemetery, he very considerate-
ly made a dying request that the burial
precede the sermon. But the traditional
village custom—suffering thereby in its
amour-propre—thrilled with protest. .
How fill the hiatus left by no invitation
to “view the remains?” . . . What hap-
pened—what, of all things? The singing
of “Praise God from whom all blessings
flow.” . . . Now, X, if thou chance
to be master of ceremonies at my taking
off, let there be no *Te Deum*, even if, in
the words of Rhoda Broughton, “A very
small bottle might hold the tears shed
upon that occasion.” Let all meagreness

of material befitting the obsequies be discreetly veiled.

But to return from my funeral, to the other. Yes, the officiating, said: "Let us rise and sing, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'"
 The choir, which at the opening exercises had promptly responded to the announcement of "Hark! from the tomb," remained for one brief moment mute. . . .
 In that flash of pause, two "long, long thoughts" I am morally certain, became the common property of priest and people. Thought No. 1: "Oh, for an ever-abiding sense of the fitness of things." Thought No. 2: "But when you find you have nailed the wrong colors to the mast, beyond recall, clinch them."
 Apropos of the fitness of things, whole pages of science might be reduced to the value of waste paper by the tenure of that parson. A man with a wife and nine children, a citizen upright, down-right, staid, prosaic, an evangelist; yet in feature, physique, an Apollo. Prodigal of gesture in oratory, posing with a grace to

satisfy the soul of an artist, making in the brief turn from desk to chair, three separate and distinct movements of the shoulders, describing as many lines of beauty. In short, an outward and visible Rev. Charles Honeyman. But that worthy improved by avoirdupois.

. . . . You express yourself well, X, in the paper submitted to my inspection. You are not as yet guilty of the national, the inter-national indiscriminate use of the word nice. But beware, for I notice it appears in your repertoire well-polished with frequent use, whilst perchance full many of its more worthy but less enticing fellows are born to exist unseen. One of Disraeli's best types, the Portuguese, is made to say: "The English language consists of four words: nice, charming, jolly and bore, and some grammarians add fond."

LETTER FROM A HORN-
BOOK DAME

LETTER FROM A HORN- BOOK DAME

A recent newspaper article causes me to grow reminiscent. The writer, it appears, has just entered the ranks of those who for years have been endeavoring to drag from its sacred shrine into the light of common day that dignified fetiche—A Classical Course in Education. I remember that “lang syne,” among the very first who armed themselves for this ignoble purpose was one of that day’s foremost thinkers. To be sure, his weapon was nothing but a nineteenth century feminine bodkin, and not that formidable, undraped, immortal instrument that stands between “to be, or not to be.”—Which see:—“No one admires more than I, the subtle, indescribable fineness, both of thought and diction, which a thorough, classical course of education gives to the scholar. But its absence there is not so

deplorable as that display of cheap learning which makes the American oratory of thirty and fifty years ago, a national humiliation. Even in its best form it was bedizened with a classical tinsel which bespeaks the vanity of the half-taught scholar."

— — "Et tu Brute!" Thou didst aim to "down" a fellow-prince, in order to reach over his prostrate body, the donkey in lion's skin. . . .

Without our thorough, classical scholar, the world wouldn't go round, I assure you. "We should do our utmost to encourage the Beautiful, for the Useful encourages itself."

The introspective should be ministered to, as forming part of humanity. The silent minority of earth, for whom "bread alone" is but a "stone," without the savor of beauty in speech or form. . . . This little band, La Rochefoucauld must have had in mind when he wrote: "Superfluities have been defined as things we cannot do without." . . .

. . . For the practical side,—years ago, when education was for the most

part, the privilege of the leisure class, and the strictly scientific course was not, as it sometimes now is, a necessity, a certain College organized a course in science which required no knowledge of Greek and but a slight acquaintance with Latin. After an experience of ten years, it was found that the best work in science was done by those thoroughly grounded in the classics. . . .

. . . This same newspaper correspondent entertains us with a dissertation upon what he is pleased to call "back-country schools"—which, by the way, is admirable for the reading of people who know bread from stones. . . .

But pray, why are the poor schools in question, so often the victims of the censor-critic—the how-not-to-do oracle?—Probably because, as Disraeli says: "The best critics are those who have failed." .

. . . There are still, in this twentieth century, even in this past-progressive United States, some schools whose sole curriculum is still the "three R's—readin', ritin' and 'rithmetic," albeit it, it is one that teacher and pupils covertly hate. I for

one, devoutly wish that a knowledge of the trio could be born with us. Then, but not till then, I should join the radicals, whose watch-word is skilled labor and whose schools are work-shops—places where childhood's exuberance, which is now so often a force that mars, may become wholly a force that makes. . . Upon this, I quote from an article recently seen: "We cannot get away entirely from the 'wooden' system until all our teachers are trained and experienced. . . . The striking difference between the old and the new education is concisely stated when we say that the 'three H's' have taken the place of the 'three R's.' That system which will reach and harmoniously develop the head, the heart, and the hand, for the ends of complete living, will perhaps accomplish most for the individual and most for the State." . . . Away at the poles of pedagogy, but a few feeble rays from the great life-giving centers can reach. . . We aspire, but alas, as St. Beuve says: "Aspirations are not plans"—no, only the vesti-

bule.
. . . Here, in this region of long
nights and feebly-lit days, 'tis only the
born teacher, he whose unerring instinct,
ycleped tact, holds school-boards, trustees,
parents, and pupils in the hollow of his
hand, that may enter into the sanctuary
of a carried-out plan. . . The rest of
us are so many birch-armed Mr. Tullivers.

.
Likewise, in the world at large, there is
the one who persistently stares at his own
infirmities, and another—like our born
teacher—a man who believes in himself,
nay, more, who may carry self-glorifica-
tion to the point of absurdity. With this
last, achievement is in part, spontaneous.
A “greatness thrust upon” him, as it were.
For eleven hours of life’s day, he idly
saunters where “all goes merry as a mar-
riage-bell.” For the one hour, he has him-
self set to “dress and keep” an Eden; picks
stray weeds from paths whose wildness
the hand of toil has already curbed;
trains vines which the sweat of another’s
brow has so pruned, chastened, that just
one more effective touch is needed to

crown them things of beauty, unfailing wells of joy; earns the "penny" that, fresh from the mint, and so, having never shared the outrageous fortune of the Man with the Hoe, sees naught in the untried world, but the reflection of its own shining face. . . . Moreover, the hand into which that coin is dropped is fair as alabaster, with a palm tinted like the lip of a shell, and finger-tips of tiny rose-petals peeping through translucent pearls. . . . "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship"—Self.

That other—who is no skimpole or turveydrop—goes through life, as I have said, fatally handicapped from seeing with full vision his own short-comings; not being blest with a "blind side," and having failed to practice that most convenient alternative known as "shutting one eye." . . . But even for him—yea, for us all, there is one line ever open, wherein we may excel: The path of saint-ship—to be good—to be serene against the ugliest odds. In this, did we but truly wish excellence, we might obtain; for there are

no barriers here, and no "thus fars." No knowledge needed of Greek, of music, of skilled labor.—Only to go to the utmost in patience, in good works, in good-heartedness. This last is the very widest avenue. One may do the neighbor good, but oh, for the saintly blindness that fails to see the neighbor's faults.
. Faint-Heart, does a sense of failure weigh thee to the very dust, even whilst thou art drunken with a sense of life's glorious possibilities?—Rise, and walk along the celestial road, there thou mayest pass, rest assured, without being jostled, even with thine arms akimbo.

FRAGMENTS OF A LETTER

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. I have heard ———
lecture. I had all my expectations of delight realized, and yet he is totally different to my conception of him. I thought he would be at least serious, if not pale and melancholy of aspect, and tall, and spare. . . He has a laughing eye. Fancy our ——— with such an outlook! There is no humor in his looks, is there? He is below the medium in height, and not angular. His face is suffused with a rare glow—a tint sublimated yet pronounced enough to indicate health. The nose is good, but lacks the fineness of—Byron's for instance,—There is your perfect nose!

One's hand is charged with character which no freedom from manual labor may conceal and no amount of toil may obliterate. ———'s—which stopped just short of plumpness, proclaimed him that most blest of all beings, the cock-sure-

man,—one getting the keenest enjoyment out of material good, because matter with him is in the leash of mind. . . . At the applause he looked as a child. . . . There are many smiles,—the silly, the offensive—which alas, is not meaningless. ———’s is the primeval, the smile of one who feels good. . . . What most impressed me as I looked and listened, was his finish. Some one says that the life of the half-trained man or woman is a tragedy. . . . I have in my mind’s eye as I write, an ideal world. The Earth is ideal for the most part, and God-planted gardens everywhere realize for us the legend of Eden. My Utopia is made up of ———s,—that is to say, of people of genius or of downright talent in literature, art, handicraft—with “hewers of wood and drawers of water” to serve them. The great majority of human beings, the average, the half-trained men and women, whose lives are tragedies,—I most certainly, you mayhap—would be ruled out, annihilated, as cumberers of the ground. What a long, dismal procession towards Eternal Nothingness! Dante’s

Inferno, methinks, becomes less ardent in face of this appalling alternative—the loss of the ego.

I am glad existence was vouchsafed me until I could swing my little censer under the mortal nose of this immortal. . . . Physiognomy coquettes. I have known a number of people with true Byronic noses, who made no career whatever. I am bound to say, however, that they tried to. . . .

. . . A woman with neither kith nor kin in this community, oft-times alone in the silent village house, my mind rings the changes on the two poems: "The Last Leaf" and "The Last Man." Pathos:—

"The names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On a tomb."

And tragedy:—

Every name save one—his own—become naught but "such stuff as dreams are made of." . . . I, for one, lay claim to some hours that are aimless, purposeless, colorless,—to others, wherein petty cares grow big with pasturing on my sweet

content. I dream, mayhap with protest, of the incentives that are born of an urban life; I recall that Fanny Fern said: "In town, all things needful may be had by reaching out of the up-stairs window." But 'tis so vulgar to be dissatisfied with one's surroundings. I have all my life been trying to emulate doctor Primrose. But the sum total of my philosophy, together with that of those who have entered the arena with me, would scarce make up a single day of that worthy's life,—day calm and serene, on heights all sunny with trust;—far beyond danger from the "slings and arrows" of his "outrageous fortune;"—far beyond our mean and fretful little existence on befogged lowlands.
 . . . There never was, there never will be,—but one doctor Primrose, vicar of Wakefield.

. . . I have an old volume: The Letters of Elizabeth Montague, wherein she says:—"It is not consistent with the dignity of our minds, nor that spark of divinity we call our soul, to be affected by every change of situation;—virtue is

guard enough in a crowd, and companion enough in a desert." We read this writer's sparkling wit, her clever originalities, all expressed in the purest and most elegant English, with a patronizing wonder how, without the smart and forceful words of our latter-day lexicon, she could manage to steer so clear of dullness. .

.
. Latterly, in my sometime visits to the metropolis, I am reminded of the fact that on-coming years, and a provincial atmosphere, have rendered still more sluggish a natural deliberateness of gait and tardiness of perception. I am prodded in the back by the street-car man, as he utters: "Step along lively, lady, please."

. Now on my native heath, where I am saluted by my given name, I get the right of way in deference to an obvious unfitness for the performance of that identical feat in locomotion. . . . Edward Everett Hales' bit of inspiration: "Look out and not in, look up and not down, look forward and not backward, and lend a hand," finds in me, its living antithesis.—I, lend a hand, when I would fain oft-

times borrow an extra pair! — — And I sigh for the lumbering stage-coach, and for the city horse-car of my youth.— — — “Not the stage-coach,” says Mentor, “with the finest lectures of the year announced for the dead of winter—a season that, you find more and more ‘frosty,’ and less and less ‘kindly!’ ” “But with a soapstone,” I reply, “and I might even resurrect the foot-stove of my grandmother.” “Fancy,” says Mentor, “you—that is, your stage-coach—driving up to an unknown country-house for fresh coals for the foot-stove, or to have your soapstone re-heated while you wait. You forget that hospitality means several days’ notice and full credentials.” And I sigh again, devoutly wishing that sighs were fairy-wands. Sighing for The 18-Mile House, The 10-Mile House, for all those departed wayside halts that once dispensed a comfort rude, but sweet; where, at a groaning board, real hunger, actual need, ate without cavil, nay with relish, what mere pampered wish might have spurned. . . . Before Cowper and since ever

“Ease, when courted most, furthest retires,
An idol at whose shrine, who oftenest sacrifice
Are favored least.”

TOW SPINNINGS



COMMERCIALISM AMONG
STUDENTS

TOW SPINNINGS

COMMERCIALISM AMONG STUDENTS

. Simultaneously with yourself, here is President E. exclaiming against the commercialism among students. The Pierian Spring it seems in this twentieth century, no longer bears the legend: "Drink deep, or taste not," but: "Drink of the dangerous thing only what will suffice to wash down bread and butter." Shakespeare stayed his pen from "The Tempest," from "King Lear," from all else that proclaims him "vast and universal," and writ large, in a mean little phrase, the fact that he is also "colorless as light." Only three mundanes in this 190—, may ignore that well-fathered prophetic, bit of advice: "Put money in thy purse." Only three: the

genius, the hermit, and the philosopher. And Diogenes' lantern may have found them, but to utilize the modern search-light for any such quest, would be but to repeat the story of Sodom. . . .

. . . I am wondering how many of us, if left wholly to ourselves, with no low whisperings of the fact born in us, and no blazoning of it from the very moment of our birth, would think the Earth round. . .

. . . I am thinking that of what we call good, of what we call evil, we can see only from horizon to horizon. A plane, a segment, a culmination, so to speak, of that never-ending—"moving why ye did it." . . .

. . . May the glance of One who is without beginning or end, sweep this circlet of human passions into a radiant diadem that will crown His glory. . .

Such contiguity of good and evil, where our human ken can scarce outline the boundary, such mysterious, inextricable, awful, commingling of light and darkness, hate and love, fairness and over-reaching, beauty and insightliness,—may He who set His bow in the clouds, with its won-

drous, subtle blending of colors, may He resolve all Earth's motley into a resplendent whiteness—an ineffable purity. . .

. “I shall consider it a part of my duty in the future, to impress on the minds of young people the thought that while an education aids in earning a living, it is primarily not for that purpose.”

. . . Do you recognize that very laudable sentiment, expressed in that very well-rounded period? I am proud of my kinsman as I copy it. . . . It may answer for Mr. Vholes. He cannot, 'tis true, be the genius, unless he happened to be born in the purple. He might stoically exist as the hermit or the philosopher, but, “no man liveth unto himself alone,”—there is that “aged father in the vale of Taunton.” The aged father is not ubiquitous, but the peerless, the priceless young woman is—very much so. Now if loyalty to a parent is a trait worthy of a hero, heaven and earth conspire to crown as demi-god the noble young man who weds and loves supremely, a pure-hearted maiden. There was a day when Moore's winged little isle might have wafted

them off to seas unknown, where they could live, love, die alone. But now the couple never hear even, of Paradise, or of Peris, or of the loves of the angels, as we heard years and years ago, out of a beautiful, beautiful book, all brown and gold, now lying tarnished and musty on a long-forgotten shelf. And there was another volume, in red and gold, with a vignette of a vine-branch, all grace, trailing round a—well, a goblet. And the leaves of the book bore stains of—what! can it be? Yes, it is!—"I smell the blood of an Irishman."

. . . . But the W. C. T. U. and Mrs. Nation have spirited the "Melodies" away. Away, where this once tuneful Memnon has become mere dumb parchment again.

But this is a digression. As I said, now the couple stay in Rome. To them are born children.—Strong sons and blooming daughters—a family. But one of exalted parentage, bearing on its face the stamp of its noble stock.—The hermit is no longer possible. A by-word, a laughing-stock, an absurdity, a monster, a myth is he. The philosopher, however, may still exist. A

composite being made up of this one's patience, that one's tact, the other's wit. Is there yet hope that the purse may be de trop? . . . Alas, alas, alas, "who lives in Rome must do as Rome does." The fiat, "no man liveth unto himself alone," becomes here, trumpet-tongued. . . . On the little isle and to be had for the plucking, is that which there feeds the soul to repletion with beauty: a handful of lilies, sparkling with dew-drops. Solomon, appareled as becomes his kingly glory, but acts as a foil to one of these. An order backed by all the wealth of Solomon's coffers would fail in the manufacture of so much as a single petal. . . . The purse, filthy lucre, trash, we call it, may well there be relegated to the proper receptacle of filth—the crematory. . . . In Rome, in Rome, to delight the eye, the soul, instead of the lily, there is the sheen of satin,—instead of the dew-drops, "the shimmer of pearls." And they are not to be had for the plucking. . . . Earth does not spell Utopia, and never will. Were heaped multi-millions spread into a plain of uni-

versal competence, "vaulting ambition" would straightway begin piling up again. And yet, this monster which o'er-leaps itself, which we all would fain bind fast behind prison bars, was mayhap, in its incipency, a very child of light: The Love of the Beautiful.—To encourage which, to foster which — — — — —

DOWN IN THE WORLD

FEATHER WEIGHT GOODS

BY A CREEPER

DOWN IN THE WORLD

FEATHER WEIGHT GOODS

BY A CREEPER

—“Two by the same author—The Bible and The Book of Nature” said Charlotte Bronte when questioned as to her favorite works. Inspiration—the only lore upon whose pages is spelled out for us the word immortality.

The Earth. This World is a volume all marred with the story of Adam and Eve and the Serpent, but the glorious Earth—no less than Heaven—is everywhere illuminated with the loving touch of God’s finger. Much, much of what is here, as truly represents Him as what is there.

Destiny, finding me possessed of a natural sluggishness, both mental and physical, which years of provincial environ-

ment have but emphasized, catered to her sense of humor when, she endowed me with a passion for French, Dancing, and Birds.

Now French is a touch-and-go language which I always associate with a light step, a retroussé nose, end-flying ringlets, except in the case of the letter R, where the force expended might suffice to move Heaven and Earth. Of this letter are born the savants.

When the millennium dawns—and Dancing, who now often pirouettes through life in vice-besmirched raiment, shall again be clothed upon with purity, shall again echo with her every foot-fall the melody of a Greek lyre, shall again tell in her glance her kinship with poesy and art, when that time comes—I shall confess that one of my most-cherished memory-pictures, a scene now dim with age, has been that of a group of children, clad as my book tells me fairies are, and dancing to the sound of merry music at night and at an hour when children should be abed; and we of larger growth as well, according to modern nature rules.

It was in the salon—brilliantly-lighted, and gorgeous to my unsophisticated eyes—of a stately ship on the broad bosom of the Chesapeake Bay. Grown folks there were too. Ladies with hair powdered and a la Pompadour, and in gowns with silken trains, and gentlemen in knee breeches and peach-bloom coats, with broad, shining shoe-buckles and hair in queue, bowed through the stately minuet together. I was in my early teens, and just from “the country.” The only thing akin to this sight that I had ever seen was “The Drunken Sailor.” But until vice shall surrender her sword to virtue, until the words Calvinism, Mayflower, Puritan, Methodism, shall be spelled with orient vowels, and pronounced with the delicious, liquid accent of one of Cable’s Creole types—that picture shall be turned to the wall.

As to Birds, it was I—I in a previous state of existence—who conceived the idea of putting salt on their tails in order to catch them. This method, I am sorry to say, is not always effective. But there is an open sesame, thank God, for

Nature's wondrous secrets, and, like the Blessed Gospel, 'tis free to fool and sage alike: Sweet Patience! It enables you to identify your bird on some happy, red-letter day, by seeing him in the act of singing. Thus: March 19, saw some sparrow-like birds feeding on cedar berries scattered over the snowy ground. Head crimson, breast crimson above, melting into neutral tint, as if a drop of color had trickled down. Soon after, saw one on a bush. He was singing—"A twitter, twitter, wee"—a sweet sound, but not noticeable from within doors unless listened for. It was the Purple Finch.

"T'sweet here, T'sweet here," and sometimes—very rapidly—"Eury, eury, eury:" This was the crested Tit.

I know not what writer tells me of one of the Song Sparrow's several ditties: "Maids, maids, maids, come and put the kettle on, ettle, ettle, ettle, ettle." But friend, I thank thee. The words and music fit like hand in glove. Listening to it, no matter where, you are not there but in the comfortable kitchen of some tree-shaded farm-house with Mrs. Poyser call-

ing from the open window to Molly and Nancy, without, who come dutifully running at her bid. . . In the book, the back of the Song Sparrow is striped brown and white, and a spot is in the center of his breast. The stripes of the Tree Sparrow, it is said, are more clearly defined than those of the Song Sparrow.

A born "hewer of wood, and drawer of water" labors, comparatively speaking, with an apparent freedom from effort that is pleasant to the eye of the beholder. The magnificent Cardinal, poor fellow, early in the season proclaims, with splendor of plumage, and mellifluous whistle: "The world is a court, and I am king." Later, the nest almost on a level with my eye and nearly within reach from my open window, I see him the jaded paterfamilias, his court dress strewn the ground with tatters. He is apparently as genuine a pessimist as the most embittered human among us. His mate, in dress of rich, but subdued color, is evidently a plebeian, whose stolidity blunts the edge of care. All through their honey-moon, each morning about four, ere the silence was

otherwise broken, there reached my chamber, just above their home in the Box-bush, a brief, rich strain. Then would follow a profound hush, and da capo. No human master of song ever studied effect, by alternating sound and silence, more than this God-taught, love-taught creature seemed to do.

The Blue-bird's "tru-al-ly" or "cheer-ily," though undeniably commendable in sentiment, is uttered in a half-hearted way that makes no appeal, either to my morale, or to my sense of joy. I would fain marry this fair creature of celestial dyes—the clear azure of the zenith, mingled with the saffron tints of the orient and occident—to a music which I find all the more charming, in that it as yet, for me, belongs to the unknown, hence the mysterious. It is the embodiment of all the dawning sweetness of Spring-time. One may simulate the sounds thus: Through parted lips, a soft, in-drawn breath, followed by three low, tremulous whistles. A prosaic page offers the Redstart as a possible claimant: "A smallish bird, common, with black wings and tail streak-

ed with orange and vermilion; Song, like the small, round tin whistle that is blown placed inside of the mouth."

Set over against each other in the very beginning of earth's fair blossom time, are the Flicker, one of the wood-pecker tribe, and the Junco, or Snow-bird. The one in mottled garb of grey, red, yellow, and white, moving conspicuously, with his incessant, "wicker, wicker, wicker"—not metallic, like the "click" of the wood-pecker, proper—the other in gown of severest hue that I feel sure was made out of a remnant, so sparse are the folds. Its lisping "tchee, tchee" whispered as if even sound must be economized.

Read the rigmarole that Thoreau puts into the throat of the Brown Thrush, and you will hear it too. I am always hearing the "hurry up," alas, without any Thoreau key. His injunction is only preliminary. According to this Yankee of the bird-world, there is an appalling deal of work to be done after you arrive, all out of breath. The Brown Thrush is a relative of the Robin—of the same size—with a tawny back and spotted breast.

Had I never read Bird books, wherein, without fail, the slender, slate-colored, bright-eyed Catbird is made a butt, instead of suspecting that he profoundly admires and imitates the Brown Thrush—their song being so nearly identical—I should accuse the raspy-voiced Thrasher of himself being the plagiarist. Our Catbird, for two seasons now, has been enamored of the word flibbertijibbet. I am alternately amused and vexed at his infatuation. He is the ignoble representative of one of “his uncles, or his cousins, or his aunts,” who some ten years since, had a nest in the Box-tree, hard by the chamber of our poor Shut-in, whose nurse I was. We often wondered—she and I—did this bird sing in its sleep? Sometimes at midnight, always ere the faintest glimmer of summer’s hasty dawn, the suffering and the watcher had their souls borne as on the wings of angels, to a heaven of rapture, by a soft, rich strain. Only for one sweet, brief moment it was, but the sufferer brought back Hope to nestle close beside her, and soothe her weary pillow, and the nurse Comfort to bathe her weary eyelids.

The birds about us are our own. They are not strangers. Year after year, they or their blood-relations, return to the same community, after hibernating, even to the same homestead. Blessed truth! The Cat-bird may boast of skill and expression, but lacks that "golden thread through all his woof of song"—volume. The voice of the English Nightingale, at times, fills a space of one mile in diameter.

June 5th. As I was standing by an open window this morning a Mocking Wren perched on the sill, and remained there for some moments, then flew to a maple near by and sang my favorite selection in this repertoire: "It'll eat you, it'll eat you, it'll eat you," loud and clear, the sound waves balancing themselves on the air like toy balloons. Now, that is what I call a delicate attention.

.

She—the Shut-in—and I the nurse had been for years the sole occupants of the old, tree-shaded house, and the sick-room was on the first floor. Mayhap many a belated wayfarer, seeing sole glimmer amid the gloom, our midnight

taper, had exclaimed: "How far yon little candle throws its beams."—At last the night came when she needed but the death watch, and I went up-stairs to the rooms so long tenantless, with the thought how strange it would be to turn down the light and go to bed. I left my lamp in an ante-room and entered the adjoining chamber where the rays of a full moon streamed through the uncurtained window. From a thing on the broad sill outside—an undefined heap of mingled pallor and gloom—stared a pair of eyes—wide-open, unresponsive, expressionless, stony. . . . In a flash, without so much sound as a dropping rose-petal, without so much stir as an infant's breath, there was—nothing, nothing but the ledge, reflecting the pale moonbeams. . . . How conceive of a disembodied spirit's motion, when Owls—all night birds—because their outer-edge wing-feathers are curved backward, can thus vanish—mingle with the "viewless air" apparently, amid unbroken, death-like stillness.

With the Owl, we associate thoughts of mystery, gravity, profound research, mel-

ancholy. In its round eggs, ringed eyes, the drowsy ball that it becomes in the glare of noon-day, we see the circle, the thing without beginning or end—no past, no future, an eternity of now. . . . Fitting accompaniment is this embodied pathetic minor to the wail of Thoreau's Screech Owl: "Oh, that I had never been born!" *

Stooping to pass through an arch formed by the intermingled branches of some shrubbery quite near the house, I overturned a Dove's nest, with its two precious eggs of purest white. The sweet confidence thus rudely shaken was never restored. Henceforth the bird sought a neighbor more considerate. The smooth unvarying coo, the decorous, uni-colored plumage, bring an image of Propriety cradled by kind Fortune—an inner being

*Note.—The circle idea may be still farther carried out. The Owl has no profile. The eyes are in front, instead of the side of its head. Its face is round. The ears are in the cheeks. "O" predominates in its notes. The Horned Owl says: "Hoo-oo, hoo-oo." If H be silent, all is O.

of safe mediocrity, incapable alike of exalted joy or hopeless misery. The child Lucy Dean, perched upon a sofa, her head as motionless as "a painted ship upon a painted ocean," in order to keep her hair a-curl. The woman Lucy Dean, with only the coo, happily, to express gladness or sorrow. In sunshine, the love which is only tender, never passionate; in cloud, a pleasing melancholy, in which there is no note of despair. A mournfulness well-schooled, which comes only when she elects to caress it.

June.—A wood wherein is a spring, which, like all of its kind, is born to bless. At its source, Earth ventures, even amid the rude blasts of winter, to send her nurselings of verdure out to play, and the truant darlings confidingly follow every tinkling foot-fall of the rill on its mission of gladness. Other woods with other springs are not far off, but this spot the Wood Thrushes most favor with their songs. At all hours of the day—even in the "stilly noon"—have I heard here sweet sounds, as of many flutes softly breathing: "Holy, holy, holy."

Owing to the ventriloquism of these birds, you must be rarely patient to trace them when they are singing. I frequently see them silent about the ground beneath the trees. Once, as I reclined upon the grass above the spring, I chanced to look upward, and there, in a young chestnut tree, on the next bough but one to the ground, was the singer. Smallish, slender, the back tawny, the spotted breast, pale, pearly green—like the tender willow verdure. Preceding each strain was a mellow gurgling—Joy seeking utterance—welling, welling into an overflow of delicious sound. . . .

“She is here, oh!” shrills a bright orange and black Oriole, or Fire-bird, from the topmost bough of a locust tree. “Sweet, I’m glad to meet you—to meet you-u-u, oh!” answers a Vireo. By the book, the White-eye! And this unvaried but musical game of words is often carried on the livelong fair June day. Both build hanging nests, and both make my neck ache and strain my eyes, watching them on their lofty perch. The mahogany-colored, orchard Oriole, it is said, does not get its true colors for four years.

The little, warbling Vireo especially affects villages and towns. Fear—from the wilds—says: “Go not! Here are but the claw and the beak. There—over against the plow-share and the pruning-hook—are the sword and the spear; and mingled with the sweet incense of adoration wafted heavenward, is the ‘rude belching from the cannon’s mouth.’” But the only answer is: “Vireo, vir-e-e,” a bit of peace inspiring, incessant-rolling melody, in the very midst of man-made town, keeping alive in the human breast the memory of that God-given, millennium promise: “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb. . . . And a little child shall lead them.”

“Which is it, which is it, which is it?” rapidly, and like the rattle of tiny shot, persistently asks the little Maryland Yellow-throat. And this Paul Pry might find an answer, would he but stop long enough to hear the frank, “I’ve cheated ye, I’ve cheated ye” of the tiny black and yellow Goldfinch, uttered on the wing. His is not the straightforward motion of the incorruptible. His little body bounds in un-

steady waves. Alternately he is the fugitive from justice, and the penitent avower of his peculation. But I should blot out this written fancy with repentant tears, for I have heard these Finches—assembled in groups—singing another song, pure and sweet, but unobtrusive.

Listen for a strain that has been likened to the artless prattle of an infant. It is rather the inconsequent discourse of a fool, but one with method in his madness, namely, the court jester—meaningless smile, cap, bells, and bauble. Once I saw him haranguing astride of the garden palings; once, perched on the roof of a stable. . . . Only the Indigo Bird. It is said they do not get their true colors until the third season.

Respect the Chimney Swift—afar off. Domicile him not; still, consider him. He makes interesting reading. His kind in China and India furnish the edible nests which are found in caves, and sell for thirty-five dollars per pound. They are said to be insipid; still, at that price, I think one could manage to extract some savor. The bird swallows a glutinous

sea-weed and then disgorges it. With this it fastens its nest. The nest of our Swift—of twigs cut from the tree by the bird in its flight—is glued with saliva. The Swift is practically ever on the wing, repeating its “tsip, tsip,” and can go one thousand miles in twenty-four hours. It feeds its young during the night, but is classed crepuscular, not nocturnal. All of exquisite daintiness is expressed in the egg—its shell pearly white, translucent, revealing the yolk within.

A bit of dusk, spangled with gold, heralds: “Spring of the year!” This Lark’s song is the promise of a joy—vague, intangible—a pallid dawn, with the faintest blush of expectancy. Hearing it, I am primeval. All lore, of legend or book, is forgotten. The horizon is the espousal of the earth and the sky, and I go on, on, ever hastening to the marriage festival. The rain-bow is a colossus, which plants its feet on solid ground, and at the key-stone is Heaven. A bird I hear—they call it the same Lark—all through the summer, oftentimes close to my ear as I glean among the sheaves, crying then, in clear-

cut tones: "Harvest is here!"—Fulfillment.—All of delicious mystery naught but a memory.

Adversity cannot "down" the Robin. I have seen him in rugged December and January. Among the earliest of early risers, he has no superior in diligence. And oft, when the summer eve—sunless, and so, pulseless—sinks, with a last, convulsive shudder, into the arms of night, God is still listening—well pleased—to this one bird's vespers. Courage in adversity, diligence in business, reverence, adoration—what examples were mortals takers of this mute counsel! But each recklessly risks to learn life's lesson, for the most part, out of his own horn-book. And, at last, the thin volume mastered, he stands recorded on the great commencement day, the page all stained with the tears of pitying angels:—defaced Deity. But there is a Way whereby, instead of the sound of angels' weeping, there will ring out a pean: "Bring in penitence, every day, each ill-wrought thesis to the feet of Divine Love, and He will make a copy clean and fair."

Walking in the lane one evening, on my astonished ear there fell some husky notes, as of a Robin with a cold(!) Thought I: Over against the page whereon I have just recorded your virtues, must I set it down that you lack prudence? Never! The harsh "Come and hear me, come and hear me," was from a Scarlet Tanager, high up on a locust bough, his bright red body, and wings of glossy, greenish black, doubly brilliant in the setting sun's beams.

I once saw the nest of the Humming-Bird. It was on a twig that had been severed from a fruit tree. What first impressed me was its strong build. It was about the size of a shell-bark nut divested of the epicarp. The humming is made by the motion of the bird's wings, but it is said to utter a tiny, mouse-like squeak. Though this bird is usually in motion when observed, I have a number of times seen it at rest; once perched on the cup's edge of a white day-lily. Could Fancy paint a picture more refined? Only with glances—the hands of the soul—dare mortals caress such exquisite, corporate

God-thoughts. . . . Often, in reverie, I am again on the deck of a certain dainty steamer. The day is sunny, the air but faintly stirring. The ship has a motion—slow—almost imperceptible—through the waters of a canal. One fancies that with outstretched arms he may touch the banks. Beauty over against beauty as far as the eye can reach. A wood for the most part, but not not a recluse, wrapped in gloom. Heaven's blue, all laced with tender green, and through the lattice the sun shoots golden favors. Dusky tree-boles, not with incisive outlines barring contiguous space—No "I am here, and be thou there;" but each with the contour of a snowflake. Row after row of veritable pillars of cloud set up against the "viewless air." For arches, boughs full-draped with tapestry of matchless shading, and, fluttering in and out, like brilliant, breeze-stirred banners flung against the green, are Red-wing Blackbirds, uttering, for legend, their victorious "conque-ee."

Many sweet sounds—siren-like—sweep with snowy fingers their wondrous harps,

and chant in delicious tones a tenderly-wooing song. But they are captives, to grace the train of an all-pervading stillness that sways our souls like the music of an Eolian harp: Anon—joy itself—we roam the flower-decked prairie, gay in attire, void of thought as any blossom of them all. Anon—on a magnificent outburst of melody, grandly sweeping like the rich, full tones of an organ echoing through the lofty arches of a cathedral, we are upborne to sublimated heights. Anon—a last shuddering wail, with flagging wing, carries us down, down to the night, and Doubting Castle, where—Faint Heart—we wrestle with Giant Despair.

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On deck, the calm voice of the elect is hushed into a sweetness still more spiritual, and the obtrusive, shrill, self-conscious chatter of the undisciplined is toned into something akin to melody. . . “Thy speech bewrayeth thee.” Whether thou usest thy brief bondage of mortality as prison bars, against which thou beatest with incessant, childish moan; whether, in gilded cage, disporting thyself with

many a "firt and flutter" thou hast for all thought. But how thou canst best "take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"; or whether, an elect spirit, thou art a docile pupil in Life's great Training-school, and so, thy God-given powers take on something of the Divine.

Meadow lapses there are, where Earth puts off her stateliness, and, decked with gaudiest blossoms, flaunts beneath the broad sun-stare. . . . And then, a "dim, religious light," where Magnolia blooms make rich the air of God's cathedral with balmy incense—incense wafted from fairest censers, swung by blameless priests. From hidden niches rise songs of praise. . . . Here are master-tones—Volume, skill, expression, sweetness! I have longed to hear the Hermit Thrush, which the book calls Beethoven among birds—the Bobolink, which, it is said, neither hautboy, flute nor dulcimer can match. Failing this, I yield to thee, O Mocking Bird, all these praises. . . . Thrice, now, have I passed this way. Once, on a pitiless, pelting night, with voice like the "Banshee's boding

scream," and once, on a day when Earth, screened by gloomy, envious clouds from her shining lord, drenched herself with tears—tears, hopeless, unavailing, of which was born no radiant Iris, bearing sweet promise of assuagement. And yet, persistent as the little maid in "We are Seven," I'll say: Nay, but both were day—and fairest. For in the night, which "closed the shutters fast, let fall the curtain, brought the bubbling and loud-hissing urn;" and in the day, when dogging Care leaned o'er my shoulder, on the table lay two matchless songs of matchless singer—and Care fell back. With "The Princess" on I went, "in the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees," while, "sweet and low" were "all the horns of Elf-land, faintly blowing"; or, with the fair Elaine, the "lily maid of Astolat," "Up the great river in the boatman's boat, beyond the cape that has the poplar on it, far up the shining flood until we found the palace of the king."

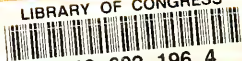
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